

Boone County Food Security Action Plan



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Executive Summary

Overall Goal of Plan:

The overall goal or mission of the Boone County Food Security Action Plan is that each person within Boone County has access to affordable, nutritious food. This will be achieved through the strategies presented within this plan.

About the Plan:

This plan was developed with the intention of providing goals and strategies to improving food insecurity within Boone County. Healthy, affordable food is essential for the health and well-being of the community; it is imperative to ensure that everyone within the community has access to healthy, affordable food. This plan has four main sections: Background, Root Causes, Goals and Strategies, and a Conclusion.

Background: This section explores what food insecurity is, what it looks like in Boone County, an overview of the Boone County Hunger Coalition, and a brief data analysis. Within Boone County, there is a 7.3% (about 3,900 people) overall food insecurity rate and a 16% child food insecurity rate (about 2,300 out of 14,200 kids).

Food insecurity is the lack of consistent nutritious, affordable food, relating to household-level economic and social condition.

The Boone County Hunger Coalition is a collaborative network of interdisciplinary stakeholders that are committed to ensuring continuity of services, providing a forum for addressing food insecurity, increasing

awareness, and providing education on the issue of hunger and food insecurity in our community. This Coalition is the driving and guiding force behind this Food Security Action Plan.

Root Causes: This section explores the root causes of food insecurity within Boone County and a brief overview of each. The four identified causes are income/economy, lack of education of services/nutrition, housing, and transportation. The effect of each of these and their limiting factors is examined to demonstrate the impact of each.

Goals and Strategies: This section focuses on the goals and strategies to address food insecurity within Boone County. Four over-arching goals were identified: Increase Community Outreach, Education, Accessibility, and Coordination. Within each goal sub-section, strategies are outlined with recommendations for each. The recommendations include, current and new, potential actions. Below is a brief chart outlining the strategies for each goal.

Goal 1: Community Outreach	Goal 2: Education
Strategies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increase Community Input through Surveys, Focus Groups, and Public Forums ➤ Increase Community's Knowledge of Resources and Participation of Them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increase Consumer and Program Education ➤ Increase Education of Nutrition and Healthy Living in School ➤ Increase Education on Gardens and Growing Local ➤ Increase Adult and Senior Education Regarding Nutrition and Healthy Living ➤ Increase Education on Food Waste and Programs to Prevent It

Goal 3: Accessibility	Goal 4: Coordination
Strategies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increase Efficient Transportation to Community Resources and Agencies ➤ Strengthen Food Assistance Infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Enhance Communication Among Food Resources and Agencies ➤ Increase Collaboration Between Agencies to Implement Strategies and Actions ➤ Increase Connectivity and Information Sharing

Conclusion: This section briefly wraps up the plan, describes the future of the plan, and summarizes each goal's strategies and recommendations in a table.

Background

Food Insecurity: What is it?

Nutritious food is essential to a person's living; it is important in one's growth and overall health. With how vital nutritious food is, many people go without it. Food insecurity is the lack of consistent nutritious, affordable food, relating to household-level economic and social condition. This is different from the feeling of hunger which is a physiological condition that may result from food insecurity.¹

Food insecurity can be caused by or related to: low income, lack of employment, disability, race/ethnicity, access to food, housing, transportation, education, high medical costs, and age. People who are food insecure struggle with one or more of the factors listed.

For some people, their geographic location can cause food insecurity due to “food deserts” and transportation issues. Food deserts can be described as geographic areas where access to affordable, healthy food options is restricted or nonexistent due to the absence of grocery stores within convenient travelling distance². Transportation issues can hinder a person's ability to reach various food resources and agencies.

Food insecurity can negatively affect a person's physical, mental, and behavioral health. Physical health is affected, since there is a higher chance of diet sensitive chronic diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and obesity. Mental and behavioral health are also negatively affected. In adults, food insecurity can lead to alienation, anxiety, and depression

¹ Definitions of Food Security. (2017, October 4). Retrieved July 30, 2018, from <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/definitions-of-food-security.aspx>

² Gateway to Health Communication & Social Marketing Practice. (2017, September 15). Retrieved July 30, 2018, from <https://www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication/toolstemplates/entertainmented/tips/fooddesert.html>

which can harm their social well-being. In children, food insecurity can lead to learning difficulties, developmental problems, and behavioral issues in school and other social situations³.

Food insecurity is a lack of nutritious food, but it is important and beneficial for communities to strive for food security which is the consistent access to affordable, nutritious food. Being food secure is essential, since it increases the chance of better overall physical and mental health. Food security also reduces health problems such as diabetes and high blood pressure. It decreases stress levels, anxiety, and social isolation. Food security allows people to live active, healthy lifestyles.



³ Importance of Nutrition on Health in America. (n.d.). Retrieved August 8, 2018, from <http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/impact-of-hunger/hunger-and-nutrition/>

Food Insecurity within Boone County

Boone County has a population of about 53,513 people with a 7.3% (about 3,900 people) overall food insecurity rate and a 16% child food insecurity rate⁴ (about 2,300 out of 14,200 kids). The most vulnerable populations regarding food insecurity within Boone County are children, families (low-income and single parent homes), and seniors. These populations were determined by the Boone County Hunger Coalition and the leaders within it.

There are various food agencies and resources within the county and surrounding region. There are three food pantries in the county: Salvation Army, B1 Food Pantry, and Belvidere Boone County Resource Center; Figure 1⁵ shows the distribution information for each of the pantries. The agencies and resources in Boone County frequently partner with the Northern Illinois Food Bank, the Community Action Agency of Boone and Winnebago Counties, the Boone County Health Department, and the University of Illinois Extension Program. The various agencies and resources work together to tackle food insecurity independently and through partnerships and the Boone County Hunger Coalition.

Major concerns regarding food insecurity are health problems, access to food, and food deserts in the more rural parts of the county. Food insecurity can lead to health problems such as diabetes, obesity, and mental health problems. Obtaining access to food is another concern, since it was determined that within Boone County there is not a lack of availability of food but rather a lack of access to food. This can be caused by insufficient transportation and food deserts.

After examining past records and data, the top causes of food insecurity within Boone County were determined to be:

- Income/Economy

⁴ Data by County in Each State. (2018). Retrieved July 30, 2018, from <http://www.feedingamerica.org/research/map-the-meal-gap/by-county.html>

⁵ Figure 1; Distribution Days

-
- Lack of Education Regarding Food, Nutrition, and Life Skills
 - Housing
 - Insufficient Transportation

*Note: A data analysis and causes of food insecurity will be discussed more in depth in later sections.

Boone County Hunger Coalition

Overview Statement

The Boone County Hunger Coalition is a collaborative network of interdisciplinary stakeholders that are committed to ensuring continuity of services, providing a forum for addressing food insecurity, and increasing awareness and providing education on the issue of hunger and food insecurity in our community.

History of the Coalition

Amanda Mehl, Boone County Health Department Public Health Administrator, organized this coalition in May of 2015 after attending a meeting with stakeholders in Rockford, IL, to discuss Food Insecurity issues. She determined that Boone County could hold similar meetings. She brought together a forum with many attendees to discuss food insecurity within the county. After this forum, the Northern Illinois Food Bank (NIFB) approached her about creating a regular Boone County group about food insecurity. NIFB explained that many of their other 13 county service areas had begun similar groups. From there, the Boone County Hunger Coalition was launched.

The coalition is currently comprised of around nineteen partners⁶ and is always seeking new community partners. They have assessed the community through a SWOT (Strength/Weakness/Opportunity/Threats) Analysis which was updated in June 2018⁷. Some of the top strengths identified are Community partners working together, Northern Illinois Food Bank, and Community Gardens. Some weaknesses identified are accessibility, community knowledge of programs, and lack of local data. Some opportunities identified are volunteers, coordinated efforts, and agricultural community. Some threats identified are transportation, affordable housing, and mental health. This analysis helps the Coalition identify key areas of work.

⁶ Appendix A: List of Boone County Hunger Coalition Partners

⁷ Figure 2

On April 11th, 2017, the coalition held a poverty simulation which exposed community members and partners to the realities of living in poverty and the food insecurity that can go along with it⁸. There were about 80 attendees with around 50 participants and 30 volunteers. The event received positive feedback with almost all participants saying that they gained a greater understanding of food insecurity and poverty. This interactive, immersive hands-on experience allowed community partners to view a way of living that they not have before.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Boone County Hunger Coalition is to educate the community about hunger and food insecurity and increase access to food resources for our most vulnerable populations: children, families, and seniors.

Vision Statement

The vision of the Boone County Hunger Coalition for the community is to eliminate barriers to receiving enough nutritious food to lead an active, healthy life.

Values Statement

The Boone County Hunger Coalition strives to incorporate the following values in its work:

Justice – All persons have the right to nutritious and affordable food and to be treated with respect no matter their background.

Inclusion – All persons have a valued voice on how to address hunger and food insecurity.

Advocacy – All persons have the ability to advocate for policies that reduce hunger and increase access to healthy and nutritious foods.

Transparency – All persons have the right to know that this coalition operates with integrity and accountability in ways consistent with our mission and vision.

⁸ Vela, S. (2017, April 12). Boone County Hunger Coalition teaches more than 50 what it's like to be poor. Retrieved August 8, 2018, from <http://www.rrstar.com/news/20170411/boone-county-hunger-coalition-teaches-more-than-50-what-its-like-to-be-poor>

Data Analysis

Demographic and Population Data

The population of Boone County is about 53,513 people, and 74.5% of people are white, 20.5% Hispanic, 2.03% Black, and 2.97% other. Out of the population, 19.2% speak non-English and 11.1% fall below the poverty line. This data is significant, since it demonstrates possible language barriers and the county's diversity⁹.

Data on Food Security and Programs

PRAN Map¹⁰

The PRAN Map represents the Proximity of Resources and Need in the Northern Illinois Food Bank's 13 county service areas by overlaying multiple pieces of data at a census tract level. The PRAN Map in Appendix C, Figure 2, shows a comparison of Boone County's data from 2014 to 2017. There are 7 census tracts within Boone County.

The green areas mean that the Food Bank is meeting at least 75% of need for food insecure individuals. The yellow areas mean that the Food Bank is meeting between 50-75% of need for food insecure individuals. The red area means that the Food Bank is meeting 25% or less of need for food insecure individuals.

As seen in the 2017 PRAN Map, there are 3 areas that are green, 3 that are yellow, and one that is red. The comparison from 2014 to 2017 shows that the top two tracts have switched places and that the Capron area has a greater need now. The map also shows that lower half of the county's, below Belvidere, needs are being met at the lowest level.

⁹ Boone County, IL. (n.d.). Retrieved July 30, 2018, from <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/boone-county-il/>

¹⁰ Figure 3

This map is significant, since it shows how the Food Bank is meeting needs of food insecure individuals. It can help determine which places should be focused on and which places the Food Bank is doing well in.

Meeting the Meal Gap Data:

This information is from the Northern Illinois Food Bank's Boone County Snapshot for 2017. Within Boone County, 7.3% of residents are food insecure, and 16% of children are food insecure. The Food Bank partners with 2 food pantries, 3 soup kitchens, 6 Backpack Programs, 14 Youth Program sites, 1 senior site, and 2 daycares.

Through their partnerships and programs, the Food Bank was able to distribute 669,692 meals in Fiscal Year 2017. 114,792 meals were distributed through Direct Connect, their retail store program where they connect stores directly to food pantries. 440,964 meals were distributed through food pantries. 75,784 meals were distributed through Food Bank programs, such as youth and senior programs. This data is significant, since it shows the impact of the Food Bank's programs.

Summer Food Service Program Data:

For the 2018 SFSP season, Boone County had 5 approved Summer Food Service Program Sites that were in partnership with the Community Action Agency¹¹. Out of the five locations, only one served meals five days a week. Two of the locations served meals once a week. One of the locations served two days a week, and the last location served three days a week. All of the locations only served lunch.

Summer Food Service Program participation data for 2015, 2016, 2017, and part of 2018¹² show the meals provided for each month Boone County had a participating site. Looking at the data, each year participation has been increasing with the exception of the 2018 year. This decline can be attributed to different factors such as lack of advertising and awareness of the program. Boone County is put into comparison with Winnebago County; Winnebago has a much higher population and many of their sites have pre-registered children. The five Boone County sites have walk-in children, and attendance varies from day to day.

This information is significant, since it can demonstrate if the locations are spread out and if they are reaching who they need to reach with this amount of locations. This information also shows on what days lunches are being served and if locations should add days or not. Sites can determine the best ways to adapt and reach out to the community by looking at the data from year to year.

National School Lunch Program:¹³

Within Boone County, 7 schools (6 in Belvidere CUSD 100 and 1 in North Boone CUSD 200) have 50.0% or more of students eligible for free or reduced lunch for the 2017-2018 school year. The majority of the students eligible are eligible for free lunch and a small percent are eligible for reduced lunch. This data is significant, since by looking at the schools it can help determine which areas are more vulnerable to or have a higher percentage of food insecure individuals.

¹¹ Figure 4

¹² Figure 5; Data received from Community Action Agency, Christopher Greenwood

¹³ Data received from University of Illinois Extension Program, Veronica Skaradzinski

Health Data

Boone County has a 9.4% diabetes prevalence within the population¹⁴. 36.1% of adults are obese, and 32.3% are overweight. Certain health problems such as diabetes and obesity are outcomes of food insecurity so by looking at who has and where these problems are prevalent it can help determine where and which populations are most vulnerable to food insecurity.

*Note: This is only some of the data available, and it is always growing.



¹⁴ Boone County, IL. (n.d.). Retrieved July 30, 2018, from <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/boone-county-il/>

Root Causes

Overview

In Boone County in relation to food security, it is not a problem of availability of food but rather the access and affordability of food. By examining the top causes of food insecurity which include income/economy, lack of education about services/nutrition, housing, and transportation, a better understanding of food insecurity within the county can be obtained.

Income/Economy

There is an 11.1% poverty rate within Boone County, and the median income is \$60,063 with the majority of residents making less than that¹⁵. There is an economic gap with residents either making below the median income or much higher than the median income. The economic disparity can cause stigmas for the lower income population. Low income can affect a person's ability to pay for housing, transportation, food, and other necessities. The wealth divide affects the minority and low income populations, preventing them from sufficiently meeting their needs.

Lack of Education of Services/Nutrition

Boone County has a lack of education regarding food services, agencies, and nutrition. This education can be geared towards children or adults. There are two school districts in the county: Belvidere CUSD 100 enrolling 8,070 children and Boone CUSD 200 enrolling 1,644 children. There is a GED Program for adults and colleges nearby such as Rock Valley College and Northern Illinois University. Formal education is important, but having education about nutrition and life skills is also.

This lack of education about nutrition and life skills can hinder one's ability to lead a healthy, active life. There are programs in the region such as in association with the University of Illinois Extension Office that deal with nutrition and health, but the reach of them and the amount of people who know about them

¹⁵ Boone County, IL. (n.d.). Retrieved July 30, 2018, from <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/boone-county-il/>

is lacking. Having a basic understanding of nutritious food and related services can allow people to be able to make healthier choices and lead to an active, healthy life.

Housing

19% of the residents in Boone County rent; 81% are homeowners. Out of the population, one-third of homeowners and 40% of renters are cost burdened. Being cost burdened means that the cost of renting or owning is too high for them to sufficiently provide financially for other necessities. Many residents in the county spend over 30% of their total income on housing costs¹⁶. Such high housing costs can lead to families choosing between paying for food and paying for housing. Having stable, affordable housing is essential so that families do not need to choose between necessities.

Transportation

In order to have access to food, the population must have access to reliable transportation. Boone County has two public transportation options: Boone County Public Transport and Rockford Mass Transit District. Each of these options has limiting factors.

The Rockford Mass Transit District only has one fixed route in Boone County that makes four round trips a day. Boone County Public Transport is in association with the Boone County Council on Aging. The buses are open to all people and have wheelchair lifts. The buses run from 8-4:30 PM from M-F; there is a small ride fee for people under 60 years old. The ride fee is \$2 for people ages 13-60 years old, and \$1 for children 12 and under. For families, they are required to bring a car seat for their young children. To schedule a ride, one must call at least 24 hours in advance¹⁷. In addition to public transportation, Boone County has some active transportation (bicycle and walking) paths with a growing interest in expanding them.

The two public transportation options have limiting factors such as the timing and hours of operation. The Rockford Mass Transit District only has four round trips a day. Boone County Public Transit only runs during weekdays and is a service that operates on demand. In addition, calling in advance and bringing a car seat can be an issue for people. The active transportation has a limiting factor of location, since not all of them reach commercial destinations. These limiting factors in transportation can cause a lack of ability for people to gain access to food and jobs. Reliable transportation is important to make sure that people can have financial stability and reach places to get sufficient, healthy food.

*Note: The Boone County Comprehensive Plan 2028 references these causes and objectives to improve them and goes into more detail. Chapter 7 discusses Economic Development, Chapter 6 discusses Education and Public Communication, Chapter 8 discusses Housing, and Chapter 9 discusses Transportation. Within the chapters, the limiting factors within each and potential actions that should be taken are examined.

¹⁶ Boone County, IL. (n.d.). Retrieved July 30, 2018, from <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/boone-county-il/>

¹⁷ Transportation. (n.d.). Retrieved August 8, 2018, from <http://www.keenage.org/transportation.html>

Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: Community Outreach

Reaching out to the community is essential to gain input and participation in different services and agencies. The first over-arching goal is to increase community input and participation within Boone County. Current and new strategies will be improved upon and implemented.

Strategies

One: Increase Community Input through Surveys, Focus Groups, and Public Forums – Through examining past records, it is seen that there is a lack of input from the community regarding their opinions and suggestions about programs, policies, and resources. This strategy will allow the community to take an initiative in voicing their thoughts regarding programs, policies, and resources and help leaders prioritize actions.

Recommendations:

Support and Improve Upon Current:

- Increase participation and distribution of surveys at nearby food pantries

Implement New:

- Develop surveys focusing around food insecurity and its causes that are both in English and Spanish
- Host periodical focus groups and public forums to gain greater community input
- Post surveys periodically on social media

Recommendations:

Support and Improve Upon Current:

- Continue and expand distribution of flyers and social media posts at key target locations and on target social media platforms

Implement New:

- Develop a comprehensive list of community resources including resources related to food insecurity and its causes
- Utilize social media to post resources and advertise them in order to reach more people within the community
- Encourage participation of resources and programs on social media and in person through talking and flyers.
- Reach a larger population through posting and distributing flyers in both English and Spanish

Two: Increase the Community's Knowledge of Resources and Participation of Them

– Within Boone County, there is a lack of awareness and knowledge of food resources and agencies related to food insecurity and its causes. This is and can be due to lack of advertising of programs and lack of outreach to the community regarding these programs. This strategy will help teach the community of what resources there are and allow them to utilize the resources when needed.



Goal 2: Education

Education regarding nutrition, food, and healthy living is lacking in Boone County. Having education regarding these topics allows people to apply the knowledge to their life to make better choices to lead an active, healthy life. The second over-arching goal is to increase and improve upon current programs and participation of healthy living programs and implement new programs.

Strategies

One: Increase Education of Nutrition and Healthy Living in Schools – Schools within Boone County and around the country focus on formal academic education, but education about life skills, nutrition, and healthy living are also essential. Introducing healthy living to children early is important for their social and mental well-being. This strategy will demonstrate the importance of healthy living in schools and to children and teens.

Recommendations

Support and Improve Upon Current:

- Support the expansion of nutrition and food system education on pre-K-12 curricula

Implement New:

- Integrate food literacy into all school campus cultures
- Support and integrate classroom education about nutritious eating and exercise
- Provide and expand youth involvement through programs geared toward nutrition such as garden clubs and junior chef programs.



Recommendations

Support and Improve Upon Current:

- Host poverty simulations every or every other year

Implement New:

- Host and expand adult and senior classes about nutrition, cooking, and healthy living
- Encourage adults and seniors to get involved in nutrition programs such as the Master Gardeners as volunteers and leaders

Two: Increase Adult and Senior Education Regarding Nutrition and Healthy Living

– The amount of adult and senior education regarding healthy living is few in comparison to education geared toward children and teens. Education about healthy living should continue throughout life, especially to those who struggle with food security. This strategy would help expand education to adults and seniors to allow them to understand nutrition and healthy living in their life and on a budget.

Three: Increase Consumer and Program Education – It is essential for consumers and clients to understand nutrition in regards to what they are buying, eating, and utilizing. A consumer can be a WIC client, a customer at a grocery store, or a guest at a food pantry. This strategy will reach consumers and help them understand how the goods and services they utilize affect them; it will also allow them to utilize these goods and services to their best ability through education.

Recommendations

Support and Improve Upon Current:

- Increase education to WIC clients and the public about grains and healthy eating

Implement New:

- Integrate healthy recipe handouts within grocery stores, food pantries, and other community agencies
- Provide mini education programs at grocery stores and food pantries about nutrition
- Educate on how to read nutrition labels and provide labels and examples of them at places serving, selling, and distributing food



Recommendations

Support and Improve Upon Current:

- Increase participation and expand education within the Master Gardeners program
- Increase use of and implementation of Community Action Gardens

Implement New:

- Develop and begin more garden-focused campaigns such as Plant A Row
- Encourage and aid churches and other community resources and agencies to start community gardens
- Educate on the workings of a farm and encourage the viewing of one

Four: Increase Education on Gardens and Growing Local

A central part of healthy living and nutrition is knowing where the goods consumed come from, and gardening is a large part of that. Gardening and education about gardening and growing local applies to children, teens, adults, and seniors.

This strategy will allow people to learn how to grow food themselves and be a part of growing and maintaining a garden.

Five: Increase Education on Food Waste and Programs to Prevent It

Food waste is the discarding of potentially usable food. This can refer to food that gets discarded at retail stores for being close to its expiration date and food that is discarded during production or consumption due to surplus.

This strategy will educate people on the discarding of edible, surplus food and how to prevent food waste through composting, recycling, and donation.

Recommendations

Support and Improve Upon Current:

- Continue education on the value of recycling

Implement New:

- Decrease food waste by encouraging composting and recycling
- Integrate education on and programs to reduce food waste in schools during lunch, at workplaces, and agencies that provide food such as grocery stores and restaurants

Goal 3: Accessibility

In addition to having the education resources, having access to food and resources is imperative to applying the resources. Accessibility includes transportation, location, and quantity of food resources and agencies. The third over-arching goal is to increase accessibility to and for food resources and agencies by improving upon and implementing new strategies.

Strategies

One: Increase Efficient Transportation to Community Resources and Agencies – The transportation systems in Boone County, Boone County Public Transit and Rockford Mass Transit District, both have limiting factors of timing, access to, and location. This strategy will allow for the understanding of these limiting factors and present ways to reduce these factors and make transportation more efficient.

Recommendations

Support and Improve Upon Current:

- Expand and encourage the reach and use of the Boone County Public Transit and Rockford Mass Transit District systems

Implement New:

- Develop transportation solutions to increase access to nutritious food and resources and agencies that supply it
- Provide access to community resources and agencies by increasing access to alternative transportation such as walking and biking.

Recommendations

Support and Improve Upon Current:

- Support and expand programs, policies, and projects such as the Summer Food Service Program that help get more healthy food to children and youth during the school year and summer
- Increase assistance to and participation to the food pantries in the county

Implement New:

- Identify and implement mobile strategies that bring healthy food, affordable food, and local food to residents
- Support grocery store, food pantry, and healthy food retail location and expansion in neighborhoods with low access

Two: Strengthen Food Assistance Infrastructure –

The current food assistance infrastructure consists of food pantries, the Northern Illinois Food Bank, and programs such as the Summer Food Service Program. Each of these resources are essential, but it is important to strengthen the access and knowledge of each of these. This strategy will improve upon and implement programs to allow for better access, use of, and knowledge of the food assistance resources.



Goal 4: Coordination

Being able to coordinate and communicate with and between different food agencies and departments is essential to accomplishing the three goals described previously. The fourth over-arching goal is increasing and improving coordination and communication between the various food agencies and departments within Boone County.

Strategies

One: Enhance Communication among Food Resources and Agencies – Currently, communication among food resources and agencies is primarily done independently and through the Boone County Hunger Coalition. Enhancing communication is beneficial, since it would allow the various resources and agencies to stay up-to-date with what each other are doing and reach out more easily.

Recommendations

Support and Improve Upon Current:

- Continue to utilize the Boone County Hunger Coalition as a communication tool among food resources and agencies

Implement New:

- Increase better communication between food resources, agencies, and the Coalition by providing a central place to send and post questions and updates



Recommendations

Support and Improve Upon Current:

- Continue to support and expand Farmers' Markets and poverty simulations through collaboration between agencies

Implement New:

- Encourage the collaboration and coordination between agencies to achieve certain goals
- Aid in helping agencies and the public understand the role of each resource

Two: Increase Collaboration between Agencies to Implement Strategies and Actions – As strategies and actions are implemented, it is essential to collaborate and coordinate between organizations to obtain the best result. Currently, organizations within the county do collaborate on projects, but this must continue to achieve the goals and a food secure community. This strategy will put emphasis on that aspect and provide actions to do so.

Three: Increase Connectivity and Information Sharing – The Boone County Hunger Coalition currently has nineteen community partners with the Coalition and is always adding more. It is important to increase connectivity and information sharing between food resources, agencies, and within the Coalition in order for everyone to stay up-to-date and to reach new partners.

Recommendations

Support and Improve Upon Current:

- Continue to support the Boone County Hunger Coalition and to provide regular meetings for the members

Implement New:

- Reach out to potential new members for the Boone County Hunger Coalition to expand connectivity
- Stay in touch with community members and agencies not involved in the Boone County Hunger Coalition to keep updated
- Be open to sharing data with the other agencies within the Coalition
- Create a monthly or bimonthly newsletter updating the community and agencies of what is happening regarding food security, agencies, and the Coalition

Conclusion

Future of the Plan

This plan was started in June of 2018 by the Boone County Hunger Coalition with the intention of addressing food insecurity and providing strategies to decrease the percentage of people who are food insecure. This plan and the strategies within will continue to grow and develop. The Boone County Hunger Coalition will continue to take a lead on this plan with the collaboration and support of resources and agencies in the county.

Summary of Goals and Strategies

Goals	Strategies	Recommendations
Community Outreach	Increase Community Input through Surveys, Focus Groups, and Public Forums	<p>Increase participation and distribution of surveys at nearby food pantries</p> <p>Develop surveys focusing around food insecurity and its causes that are both in English and Spanish</p> <p>Host periodical focus groups and public forums to gain greater community input</p> <p>Post surveys periodically on social media</p>

Education	Increase Community's Knowledge of Resources and Participation of Them	<p>Continue and expand distribution of flyers and social media posts at key target locations and on target social media platforms</p> <p>Develop a comprehensive list of community resources including resources related to food insecurity and its causes</p> <p>Utilize social media to post resources and advertise them in order to reach more people within the community</p> <p>Encourage participation of resources and programs on social media and in person through talking and flyers.</p> <p>Reach a larger population through posting and distributing flyers in both English and Spanish</p>
	Increase Education of Nutrition and Healthy Living in Schools	<p>Support the expansion of nutrition and food system education on pre-K-12 curricula</p> <p>Integrate food literacy into all school campus cultures</p> <p>Support and integrate classroom education about nutritious eating and exercise</p> <p>Provide and expand youth involvement through programs geared toward nutrition such as garden clubs and junior chef programs.</p>
	Increase Adult and Senior Education Regarding Nutrition and Healthy Living	<p>Host poverty simulations every or every other year</p> <p>Host and expand adult and senior classes about nutrition, cooking, and healthy living</p> <p>Encourage adults and seniors to get involved in nutrition programs such as the Master Gardeners as volunteers and leaders</p>
	Increase Consumer and Program Education	<p>Increase education to WIC clients and the public about grains and healthy eating</p> <p>Integrate healthy recipe handouts within grocery stores, food pantries, and other community agencies</p> <p>Provide mini education programs at grocery stores and food pantries about nutrition</p> <p>Educate on how to read nutrition labels and provide labels and examples on them at places serving, selling, and distributing food</p>

Accessibility	Increase Education on Gardens and Growing Local	<p>Increase participation and expand education within the Master Gardeners program</p> <p>Increase use of and implementation of Community Action Gardens</p> <p>Develop and begin more garden-focused campaigns such as Plant A Row</p> <p>Encourage and aid churches and other community resources and agencies to start community gardens</p> <p>Educate on the workings of a farm and encourage the viewing of one</p>
	Increase Education on Food Waste and Programs to Prevent It	<p>Continue education on the value of recycling</p> <p>Decrease food waste by encouraging composting and recycling</p> <p>Integrate education on and programs to reduce food waste in schools during lunch, at workplaces, and agencies that provide food such as grocery stores and restaurants</p>
	Increase Efficient Transportation to Community Resources and Agencies	<p>Expand and encourage the reach and use of the Boone County Public Transit and Rockford Mass Transit District systems</p> <p>Develop transportation solutions to increase access to nutritious food and resources and agencies that supply it</p> <p>Provide access to community resources and agencies by increasing access to alternative transportation such as walking and biking.</p>
	Strengthen Food Assistance Infrastructure	<p>Support and expand programs, policies, and projects such as the Summer Food Service Program that help get more healthy food to children and youth during the school year and summer</p> <p>Increase assistance to and participation to the food pantries in the county</p> <p>Identify and implement mobile strategies that bring healthy food, affordable food, and local food to residents</p> <p>Support grocery store, food pantry, and healthy food retail location and expansion in neighborhoods with low access</p>

Coordination

Enhance Communication among Food Resources and Agencies	<p>Continue to utilize the Boone County Hunger Coalition as a communication tool among food resources and agencies</p> <p>Increase better communication between food resources, agencies, and the Coalition by providing a central place to send and post questions and updates</p>
Increase Collaboration between Agencies to Implement Strategies and Actions	<p>Continue to support and expand Farmers' Markets and poverty simulations through collaboration between agencies</p> <p>Encourage the collaboration and coordination between agencies to achieve certain goals</p> <p>Aid in helping agencies and the public understand the role of each resource</p>
Increase Connectivity and Information Sharing	<p>Continue to support the Boone County Hunger Coalition and to provide regular meetings for the members</p> <p>Reach out to potential new members for the Boone County Hunger Coalition to expand connectivity</p> <p>Stay in touch with community members and agencies not involved in the Boone County Hunger Coalition to stay updated</p> <p>Be open to sharing data with the other agencies within the Coalition</p> <p>Create a monthly or bimonthly newsletter updating the community and agencies of what is happening regarding food security, agencies, and the Coalition</p>

Appendices

Appendix A: Boone County Hunger Coalition Partners

List of partners with their mission, location, and phone number:

1. Angelic Organics Learning Center
 - a. Angelic Organics Learning Center builds sustainable local food and farm systems through experiential education and training programs in partnership with rural and urban people.
 - b. 1545 Rockton Rd, Caledonia, IL 61011
 - c. Phone: (815) 389-8455
2. Belvidere Boone County Resource Center
 - a. Belvidere Boone County Resource Center is a non-profit organization that provides food and non-food products. The Center serves as a bridge to help transition those facing hard times until they become self-sufficient. The goal is to give people hope and make a difference in their lives.
 - b. 200 S 5th St, Capron, IL 61012
 - c. Phone: (815) 569-1571
3. Belvidere Police Department
 - a. It is the mission of The Belvidere Police Department to provide a safe living, learning, and working environment to all citizens and visitors of the City of Belvidere.
 - b. 615 N Main St, Belvidere, IL 61008
 - c. Phone: (815) 544-9626
4. Belvidere YMCA
 - a. The Y is Boone County's leading non-profit committed to strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility.
 - b. 220 West Locust St, Belvidere, IL 61008
 - c. Phone: (815) 547-5307
5. B1 Food Pantry
 - a. The B1 Food Pantry is held at the Belvidere First Assembly Of God Church every Thursday from 1 to 3pm. They are here to help and serve the community through providing resources, food, and guidance.
 - b. 1105 7th Ave., Belvidere, Illinois
 - c. Phone: (815) 544-3906
6. Boone County Health Department

- a. The mission of the Boone County Health Department is to serve the community by preventing the spread of disease, promoting optimal wellness, and protecting the public's health.
 - b. 1204 Logan Ave., Belvidere IL 61008
 - c. Phone: (815) 544-2951
- 7. Community Action Agency of Boone and Winnebago County
 - a. The Community Action Agency serving Boone and Winnebago Counties engages, educates, and empowers people in poverty to build stronger communities through programs and partnerships.
 - b. 612 N. Church St., Rockford IL 61103
 - c. Phone: (844) 710-6919
- 8. Compassion Closet
 - a. Founded in 2013 the Compassion Closet helps feed over 100 families each month. Eligibility for a box of food requires only proof of Boone County address. Distribution is every Thursday from 3:30 pm – 5:30 pm.
 - b. 221 North Main St., Belvidere, IL 61008
 - c. Phone: (815) 544-6402
- 9. District 100
 - a. This school district serves and provides education for about 8,000 students within the southern part of Boone County, Belvidere and below.
 - b. 1201 5th Ave. Belvidere, IL 61008
 - c. Phone: (815) 544-0301
- 10. District 200
 - a. This school district serves and provides education for about 1,600 students within the northern part of Boone County, such as Caledonia, Capron, and Poplar Grove.
 - b. 6248 N. Boone School Rd., Poplar Grove, IL 61065
 - c. Phone: (815) 765-3322
- 11. Illinois Department of Public Health
 - a. The mission of the Illinois Department of Public Health is to protect the health and wellness of the people of Illinois through the prevention, health promotion, regulation, and the control of disease and injury.
 - b. 4302 N Main St # 101, Rockford, IL 61103
 - c. Phone: (815) 987-7511
- 12. Keen Age Center

- a. The Boone County Council on Aging is dedicated to all older adults and their caregivers by reaching out with programs to help enrich and improve their quality of life.
- b. 2141 Henry Luckow Lane Belvidere, IL 61008
- c. Phone: (815) 544-9893 Fax: (815) 547-7373

13. Lifescope Community Services

- a. Lifescope is the largest agency in northwestern Illinois serving older adults, families, and caregivers in Winnebago, Boone, Whiteside, Carroll, Lee and Ogle counties. Whether a person needs a nutritious meal, help to complete complicated paperwork, assistance in paying bills, a safe place to go during the day or wants to put their talents and skills to use by volunteering at a local nonprofit agency, Lifescope Community Services is the resource that can help meet that need.
- b. 705 Kilburn Ave, Rockford, IL 61101
- c. Phone: (815) 963-1609

14. Northern Illinois Food Bank

- a. The Northern Illinois Food Bank leads the Northern Illinois community in solving hunger by providing nutritious meals to those in need through innovative programs and partnerships.
- b. 273 Dearborn Court, Geneva, IL 60134 Phone: (630) 443-6910
- c. 765 Research Pkwy, Rockford, IL 61109 Phone: (815) 639-1257

15. RAMP

- a. Established in 1980, RAMP is a non-profit, non-residential Center for Independent Living (CIL) that emulates the Independent Living Philosophy with a mission that promotes an accessible society that allows and expects full participation by people with disabilities.
- b. 530 S State St # 103, Belvidere, IL 61008
- c. Phone: (815) 544-8404

16. Rockford Urban Ministries

- a. Founded in 1962, RUM (as Rockford Urban Ministries is affectionately known) is the outreach of 16 United Methodist and 4 other Churches. RUM works on social justice and new ministries.
- b. 201 7th St, Rockford, IL 61104
- c. Phone: (815) 964-7111

17. St. John's United Church of Christ

- a. Faith is more than what happens on Sunday mornings. It's a part of who St. John's United Church of Christ is, inside and out. At St. John's UCC, they believe in sharing the joy of the gospels daily, and living a life that embodies the spirit of Christ.

- b. 401 N Main St, Belvidere, IL 61008
- c. Phone: (815) 544-3773

18. United Way

- a. Since its incorporation in July 1958, the United Way of Boone County has been an organization committed to improving the lives of Boone County, Illinois residents by sharing community resources.
- b. 220 West Locust Street Belvidere, IL 61008
- c. Phone: (815) 544-3144

19. University of Illinois Extension Program

- a. U of I Extension's programs are aimed at making life better, healthier, safer and more prosperous for individuals and their communities.
- b. 205 Cadillac Court Unit 3 Belvidere, IL 61008-1733
- c. Phone: (815) 544-3710

Appendix B: Figures

Figure 1

Pantry	Address	Distribution Information
B1 Food Pantry	1105 7th Ave., Belvidere, Illinois	<p>When: Every Thursday 1 pm – 3 pm</p> <p>What to bring: photo ID with a Boone County address and one utility bill addressed to you to verify that you live in Boone County</p> <p>How often: One visit per household every month</p>
Belvidere Boone Resource Center	200 S 5th St, Capron, IL 61012	<p>When: Every Tuesday 8 am – 2:30 pm</p> <p>What to bring: photo ID, two forms of proof of address, birthdates of everyone in the household, and the amount of money that comes into the household</p> <p>How often: Once a month</p>
Salvation Army	422 S. Main Street Belvidere, IL 61008-3740	<p>When: First Wednesday of every month 9 am – 12:30 pm</p> <p>What to bring: ID, proof of address, paycheck tab, and documents to prove family dependents on the first visit</p> <p>How often: Clients should visit once every 30 days</p>

Figure 2

SWOT Analysis June 2018

	Helpful	Harmful
Internal	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GED Program • Nutritious Food (variety) • Community partners working together • United Way • Summer Food Program • Y's Summer Program • Community Garden • Meals on Wheels • CASA Program • Northern Illinois Food Bank • Strong support and willingness to help from community and local officials • Planning (I-PLAN and others) • Bilingual classes 	<p>Weakness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seniors (meeting their needs?) • Resources for millennials and single parents • Funding Sources • Hispanic Population (expand programs & awareness) • Accessible transport (weekends/evening hours) • Community knowledge of services (health department, food pantries, community action, etc.) • Local data (need more) • Section 8 housing opportunity program (not enough units) • Low-paying jobs (access to and opportunities) • Access to food (available? Have it? Eating it?) • Providing guidance to support
External	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinated Efforts • Community Educated on Poverty • Technology • Civic Organizations • Churches • Mayor's Office • Healthcare: Mercy Rockford Health, OSF, Swedish American • Volunteers • Chrysler • Agricultural Community • Growing Hispanic Community (self-employed) 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating with Millennials • Transportation (access to food) • Job Training • Mental Health • Affordable Child Care • Affordable Housing • Minimum Wage Jobs • Businesses Closing • Current polarized political culture • Affordable dental

Figure 3

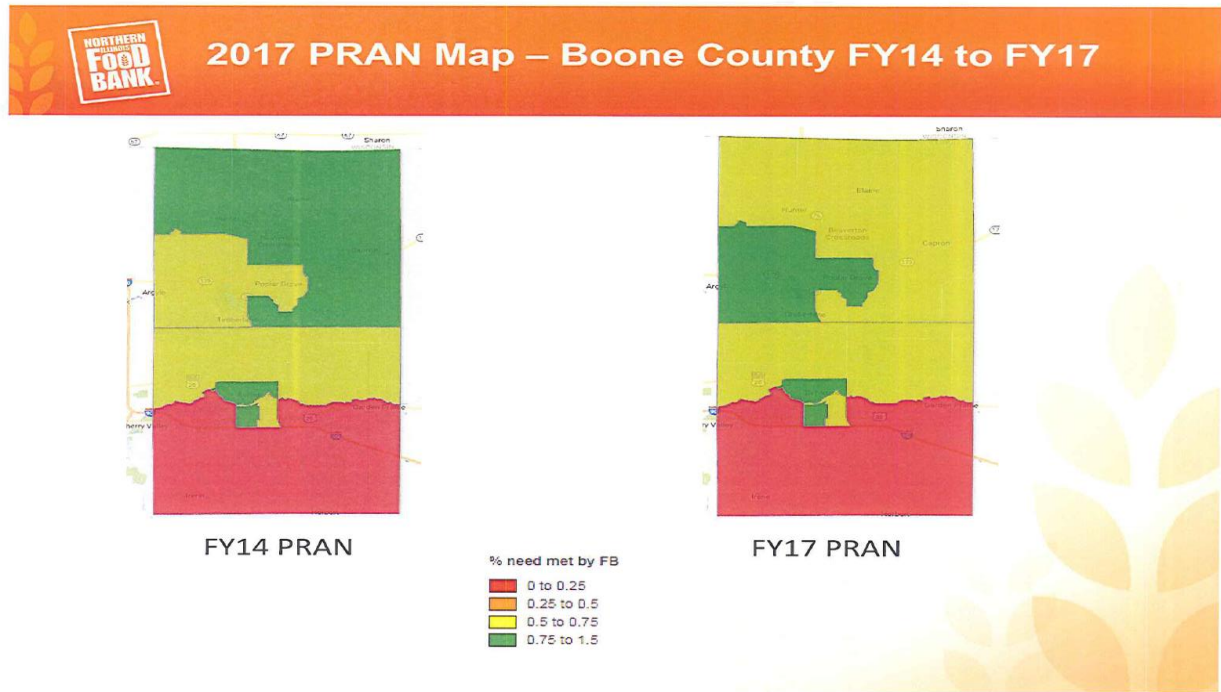


Figure 4

ISBE Site #	Site Name and Address	Contact Person	Meal Service Time	Dates of Program	Meal Service Type
73925 rt 11a	Boone County Health Dept WIC 1204 Logan Ave. Belvidere, IL 61008	Amanda Mehl 815-547-8591	11:00- 12:00	5/29/18 to 8/17/18	Lunch Tues, Wed, Friday
72786 rt 11a	Capron Lions Club 305 E. North Street Capron, IL 61012	Barbara Sager 815-289-5279	12:00- 1:00	6/4/18 to 6/25/18	Monday ONLY

75137 rt 11	City of Belvidere/Police 301 Highline Drive Belvidere, IL 61008	Shauna Arco 815-544-2612	11:30- 12:30	6/1/18 to 8/3/18	Lunch Friday ONLY
75976	First Baptist Church 1255 W. Jackson Street Belvidere, IL 61008	Karen Kraft 815-325-8037	12:00- 1:00-L	6/7/18 to 8/3/18	Lunch Thur and Fri ONLY
70873 rt 11a	St. John's UCC 401 N. Main Street Belvidere, IL 61008	Pastor Muriel 815-544-3773	11:30- 12:30	5/29/18 to 8/17/18	Lunch M-F

Figure 5

2015	Boone County	Winnebago County	Days of operation
June	272	21058	17
July	319	31659	23
August	56	11507	16

2016	Boone County	Winnebago County	Days of operation
June	501	23764	19
July	405	26782	20
August	89	6056	10

2017	Boone County	Winnebago County	Days of operation
May*	23	1154	2
June	472	24353	22
July**	459	22290	20
August	159	8677	14

* This was the first year we started meal service in May

** Please note, that all Rockford Park District sites were closed the week of July 4th due to cutbacks

2018	Boone County	Winnebago County	Days of operation
May	33	1367	3
June	306	23291	21
July	Not available	Not available	21
August	Not available	Not available	13

* Please note, that all Rockford Park District sites were closed the week of July 4th due to cutbacks

Appendix C: References

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