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How to Address Hunger in Your Community: A Checklist for State Legislators



Hunger affects communities across the United States. One in seven households was food insecure in 2010 and as many as one in five households had difficulty affording food at some point in 2011. Yet, hunger in the United States is a solvable problem. Today public officials, private businesses and nonprofits and concerned citizens around the country unite in creative efforts to address hunger in their communities. Whether it is leveraging one of the 15 federal nutrition programs administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture or promoting a local community garden, state legislators can play an active role in eliminating hunger in their districts and beyond.

This checklist serves as guide to legislators as they seek simple, low-cost ways to feed hungry families. See how you can begin **looking at the problem, raising awareness, and fighting hunger in your community.**

A Checklist for State Legislators | NCSL Hunger Partnership

Looking at the problem

- Visit [NCSL's Hunger Partnership homepage](#) to find the latest fact sheets, webinars and data on hunger across the United States.
- Learn more about how public-private partnerships can address hunger in the NCSL publication, [Bringing Legislators to the Table: Addressing Hunger through Public-Private Partnerships](#).
- [Research USDA food insecurity data for your district.](#)

Raising awareness

- Visit a local food bank and learn more about the faces of hunger in America. [Find a local food bank.](#)
- In the summer, visit a summer feeding program for children and teens in your district. During the school year, visit a school meals program. Call the National Hunger Hotline to find a site: 1-866-3-HUNGRY or 1-877-8-HAMBRE.
- Engage with efforts to fight hunger in special communities like children, seniors and veterans. Connect with local agencies addressing the issue and volunteer.
- Invite fellow lawmakers and legislative staff with you to visit and volunteer. Start the conversation.
- Consider a statewide council to analyze solutions to hunger in your state.
- Share information on how to access food services and where to donate or volunteer in your community. Highlight local hunger stories, interview community leaders and more in your district newsletters and social media such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. Engage with news media covering hunger and food issues during winter holidays and year round.
- Learn more about local, state and national officials who have taken the [Food Stamp Challenge](#).

Fighting hunger in your community

- Initiate a State Capitol Garden outside your capitol building. Use the garden to raise awareness about hunger and provide nutrition education on fruits and vegetables. Donate the produce from the garden to a local food bank or school.
- Convene a roundtable on hunger. Invite state and city lawmakers, county officials, local nonprofits and food banks, media, education leaders, private businesses and others interested in solving the problem of hunger in your community.
- Engage with local grocers, super markets, restaurants and others in the business community to see how they raise awareness, donate to emergency food agencies and address hunger near them.
- Consider state legislation to help fight hunger. Visit <http://www.ncsl.org/issues-research/human-services/state-legislation-on-hunger.aspx> to see what states are doing.

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NCSL Resources

- [NCSL Hunger Partnership](#)
- [Hunger Data and Resources](#)
- [Bringing Legislator to the Table](#)

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