see
learn
experience
hunger

Houston Food Bank Curriculum
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Houston Food Bank: Leading the Fight Against Hunger

The Houston Food Bank (HFB), a private, nonprofit organization, is the largest source of food for hunger relief charities in 18 southeast Texas counties. A network of nearly 600 partner agencies including food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, senior centers and other entities, provided 74 million nutritious meals to 800,000 unique individuals in 2015. Fresh produce, meat and non-perishables are distributed from Portwall Warehouse, a 308,000 square-foot warehouse, and hot meals are prepared and distributed from Keegan Center, a 15,000 square-foot industrial kitchen.

Additional community services range from nutrition education to assistance with SNAP (food stamp) applications and hands-on job training. Red Barrels offer a convenient way for grocery shoppers to donate non-perishables for their neighbors in need. The Houston Food Bank, founded in 1982, is a certified member of Feeding America, the nation’s food bank network. The organization plans to grow to an annual distribution of 100 million nutritious meals by 2018.

Hunger 101

The Houston Food Bank’s Hunger 101 curriculum is designed to provide information on hunger and poverty to a wide audience. Each individual activity has minimum age recommendations for your added convenience. And of course, feel free to modify each activity as you see fit to meet your specific needs.

We hope that our Hunger 101 curriculum helps to bring out the hunger relief advocate in you and your community!

If you have any questions or concerns regarding Hunger 101, please contact:

Leslie Tarango
Corporate Volunteer Recruiter
Houston Food Bank
ltarango@houstonfoodbank.org
832-369-9239

houstonfoodbank
Filling pantries. Filling lives.
Hunger

In the 18 southeast Texas counties served by the Houston Food Bank

The Need

• On a given day, 66,000 people in southeast Texas experience the pain of hunger and have no food: 5,000 are children.
• 800,000 individuals receive food assistance each year through the Houston Food Bank’s network of hunger relief charities.
• One in four children (25%) in southeast Texas is food insecure, or at risk of being hungry; overall, one in five people (18%) is food insecure.

The Face of Hunger

• They’re working: Two-thirds of food insecure families with children have at least one working adult.
• Not homeless: 97% of people served by the Houston Food Bank have permanent housing.
• Seniors: 20% of people served by the Houston Food Bank are age 60 or older.

Difficult Choices

Hungry families report they must often choose between paying for food and other necessities.

• Food vs. utilities - 72%
• Food vs. rent or mortgage - 60%
• Food vs. medical care - 74%
• Food vs. transportation - 70%

 Chronic child hunger symptoms
• Extreme thinness
• Puffy/swollen skin
• Dry, cracked lips
• Chronic sickness
• Saving or hoarding food
• Inability to concentrate

Coping Strategies

What do hungry families do if they don’t have enough to eat?

• Purchase cheap, unhealthy food - 78%
• Water down food or drinks to make them last longer - 42%
• Get help from family and/or friends - 47%
Activity #1
Preconception Exploration

Age Group
All Ages

Description
A short activity meant to explore what participants already know about hunger and food insecurity in our community and to spur discussion of these issues. If you only have a short amount of time to work with participants, this is the perfect activity.

Materials Needed
- White board or a piece of paper for each group
- Writing utensils

Time
15-20 minutes

Activity Directions
- If you have 6 or more participants, divide them up into groups of no more than 3-4 people per group. Otherwise, 5 or fewer people can form one group.

- Provide a piece of paper to each group, along with a marker.

- Ask each group to divide the paper into 2 sections and title each section as follows: “hunger” and “food insecurity”. Then give the groups 5 minutes to write down all the words/ideas that they associate with each word.

- Have each group share what they came up with.

- Go over definitions of “hunger” and “food insecurity.”

- Go over discussion questions/open the floor for general discussion.
Activity #1 continued  Preconception Exploration

Discussion Questions

• How were your ideas of hunger/poverty/food insecurity different from reality?

• What have you learned from this activity?

• Do you think that hunger, food insecurity and poverty overlap?  And in what way are these concepts different?

• What are some of the ways you can teach people about hunger/poverty/food insecurity?

• Who do you think is responsible for helping hungry people?

Definitions

Hunger
The painful or uncomfortable sensation of needing to eat, with no ability to get food

Food insecurity
Defined by the United States Department of Agriculture as a socioeconomic condition of limited or uncertain access to enough food to support a healthy life, or, being at-risk of hunger.
Activity #2
The Hunger Obstacle Course

Age Group
All Ages

Description
Participants will engage in creative problem solving through a time-limited process of generating solutions to different hunger-related problems. Small groups of participants circulate around the room and write down solutions to each of the hunger obstacles.

Materials Needed
- 8 pieces of paper (or less, if your group is smaller)
- Hunger obstacle cards (provided on following pages)
- A whistle/bell (optional)
- Writing utensils

Time
20-30 minutes

A note about modifying this activity: If you have a smaller group, or less than the recommended 20-30 minutes, you can simply place fewer obstacles for participant interaction.

Activity Directions
- Place the pieces of paper around the room. Attach an obstacle card to each sheet/poster
- Divide your participants into the number of obstacles you choose to present (i.e. if you have all 8 obstacles up, form 8 groups).
- Assign each group a starting obstacle and decide which way the groups should rotate.
- Tell the groups they will have 2 minutes at each station to think of as many solutions as they can for dealing with the obstacle. They are to write their solutions on the piece of paper, not on the obstacle card.
- Use the whistle/bell to start and stop every 2 minutes. Make sure the participants know they should not repeat any solution already listed.
- Repeat the process until all groups have had a chance to respond to each obstacle.
Activity #2 continued  The Hunger Obstacle Course

• Once finished, look at each obstacle individually and discuss some of the best solutions. Participants may consider what would happen if two or more of the solutions were combined. You can also use the ideas for solutions to help figure out additional solutions and see how some solutions could help solve multiple obstacles.

• To end the activity, talk as a class/group and see if any of the solutions could be implemented in a simple class/group project.

Obstacles

There are families in Houston where the adults and children often miss meals because they don’t have enough money for food.

Many people in your community do not know very much about the problem of hunger and do not seem to care.

Many of the children here in Houston could receive food at school, through programs that the Houston Food Bank runs such as the Backpack Buddy Program, if more donations were made. (see Backpack Fact Sheet).

There are many seniors in Houston who live alone and often don’t have healthy meals to eat, and little social contact. In Harris County, the Houston Food Bank provides a monthly box of food to 8,000 seniors. (see Senior Box Fact Sheet)

Recently, many people have been let go from their jobs and have had trouble finding new ones. They don’t have enough money to feed themselves/their families, but they don’t know how to get help.

Many people are embarrassed to have to get donated food.

You find out that some of the participants in your community are going hungry several days per week.

You find out that a friend needs food assistance, but they can only get to the closest food pantry by car. His/her family does not have a car.
Activity #2 continued  The Hunger Obstacle Course

Some Ideas for Solutions

Organize a day each month for your group to volunteer at the Houston Food Bank. Go to www.houstonfoodbank.org and click on the “Volunteer” tab to sign up—it’s easy!

Have your group host a food drive to collect canned goods to donate to the Houston Food Bank or a local food pantry in your area. We especially need protein items (e.g. canned chicken), canned fruits in light syrup, 100% juice, canned vegetables, soups, cereals, and pasta.

Be a hunger relief advocate! Simply spread the word that children, working families, and seniors need food assistance. This is a great way to help the Houston Food Bank fight against hunger.
Obstacle

There are families in Houston where the adults and children often miss meals because they don’t have enough money for food.

Obstacle

Many people in your community do not know very much about the problem of hunger and do not seem to care.
Obstacle

Many of the children here in Houston could receive food at school, through programs that the Houston Food Bank runs such as the Backpack Buddy Program, if more donations were made. 

(see Backpack Fact Sheet)

Obstacle

There are many seniors in Houston who live alone and often don’t have healthy meals to eat, and little social contact. In Harris County, the Houston Food Bank provides a monthly box of food to 8,000 seniors. (see Senior Box Fact Sheet)
Obstacle

Recently, many people have been let go from their jobs and have had trouble finding new ones. They don’t have enough money to feed themselves/their families, but they don’t know how to get help.

Obstacle

Many people are embarrassed to have to get donated food.
Obstacle

You find out that some of the participants in your community are going hungry several days per week.

Obstacle

You find out that a friend needs food assistance, but they can only get to the closest food pantry by car. His/her family does not have a car.
**Program Overview**

Many school children go home to meager or no meals on the weekends. The Houston Food Bank’s Backpack Buddy Program works to fill that gap.

- On Fridays, at participating schools and other locations, children take home food sacks containing child-friendly, nonperishable, easily consumed and nutrient-dense food.
- The food is given to the children discreetly, to avoid inviting unwanted attention.

**What’s in a Backpack Buddy Food Sack?**

The food sacks are full of healthy, nonperishable child-friendly food to last the children through the weekend. All product is prepackaged in a clear, food safe bag.

- 2 servings of breakfast grains such as cereal, oatmeal or grits
- 2-4 servings of protein
- 2 milks (8 oz. each)
- 2 snacks
- 4 servings of vegetables
- 4 servings of fruits

**How to get involved**

**Make a donation** to the Backpack Buddy program through the Houston Food Bank.

**Gifts of any amount are welcome.**

- Contact Donor Services: 713-547-8623

**Donate healthy, nonperishable, child-friendly food, preferably high in protein** such as canned tuna or chicken. Protein aids in proper brain development, muscle growth and developing strong immune systems in children.

- Contact Community Events Manager: 713-547-8670 to organize a food drive or event

**Volunteer** at our Portwall location building the Backpack Buddy food sacks.

- Contact Volunteer Scheduler: 713-547-8604
- Register at houstonfoodbank.org

**Contact**

Backpack Buddy Coordinator
832-369-9205
backpackbuddy@houstonfoodbank.org

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The food cost per backpack is $1.65, using USDA TEFAP product as well as donations.

We rely heavily on donations to help feed these children.

In FY ’15 Backpack Buddy distributed 323,044 backpacks at 532 area schools in 54 school districts in 11 counties

Goals for 2015 – 2016 School Year

700 schools
550,000 backpacks distributed by year end

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A gift of $1 provides 3 meals for a hungry child, senior or adult | houstonfoodbank.org/donatenow
Senior Box Program

The Senior Box Program is a federal initiative designed to improve the health and nutrition of income eligible seniors. Seniors receive a box of food each month, which helps stretch their fixed incomes.

Who is eligible to apply?

- Almost 8,000 Harris County residents 60 and over
- Seniors must be living on no more than 130% of the Federal Poverty Level

What do I need to do to apply?

- Interested persons may apply at over 50 distribution sites.
- Applications with proof of age and income are completed by staff.
- Identification with a picture and the applicant’s date of birth, or a birth certificate, may be used as proof of age.
- A Social Security award letter, filed income tax form, bank statement if auto-deposit is used, pension statement, and/or letter of financial support may be used as proof of household income.
- Harris County Tax Assessor documentation is required for those who live outside Harris Co. but pay Harris Co. property taxes, to prove Harris Co. residency.
- This program is presently at capacity; therefore, applicants will be placed on a waiting list.

What do Senior Box Program participants receive?

One box of food per month with an average retail value of $50, which includes the following commodities provided through the U.S. Department of Agriculture:

- Bottled Fruit juice/shelf-stable 2% milk
- Canned protein (e.g., chicken, chili, stew)
- Canned vegetables/fruit
- Bag of dried beans or jar of peanut butter
- Hot or cold cereal
- Pasta
- Non-fat dried milk (every other month)
- Two-pound block of cheese

Please call 832-369-9390 or visit www.houstonfoodbank.org for more information.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.
Activity #3
What Are Hunger’s Consequences?

Age Group
High school and up

Description
Participants will identify and discuss the many health and behavioral impacts of hunger.

Materials Needed
- Whiteboard/chalkboard or flip-chart with markers

Time
10-15 minutes

Activity Directions
- Make two columns on the chalkboard or flip-chart with markers.

- Ask participants to consider the health and behavioral consequences of hunger. If participants are having difficulty identifying any, consider offering a few examples from the list on the next page.

- At the end of the exercise, compare the class list with the list on the next page. Share any of the consequences that did not come up in the discussion.

Discussion Questions
- Are you surprised by any of these consequences to hunger?

- What are some ways that these consequences could impact a community, school, or workplace?

  Examples: high health care costs, high work and school absenteeism, low-school performance
Activity #3 continued  What Are Hunger’s Consequences?

Health Consequences

Children who are hungry often experience headaches, fatigue, frequent colds, and other illnesses that may cause them to be less physically active.

Undernourished pregnant women tend to have low birth weight babies. Low birth weight babies suffer from more physical illness, as well as impaired growth and development. Undernourished infants are at greater risk of dying within their first year of life.

Chronic hunger in adults weakens bone, muscles, and the immune system. This increases the risk of illness, worsens existing health problems, and contributes to depression and lack of energy.

Iron deficiency anemia, a form of malnutrition affecting nearly 25% of poor children in the nation, is associated with impaired cognitive development. Anemia influences attention span and memory. This pervasive deficiency is now known to have a severe impact on cognitive development.

Poor maternal and infant nutrition affect an infant’s birth weight, cognitive development, immune system and overall health.

Children and pregnant women have relatively high nutrient needs for growth and development. Therefore, they are often the first to show signs of nutrient deficiencies.

Behavioral Consequences

Children who are hungry may be less attentive, independent, and curious. Many hungry children have difficulty concentrating; therefore their reading ability and verbal and motor skills suffer.

Short-term nutritional deficiencies affect children’s ability to concentrate and perform complex tasks.

Hunger in adults produces nervousness, irritability, and difficulty in concentration.

Hunger can have a devastating emotional impact; it may diminish self-confidence and self-esteem. In a culture that encourages self-reliance, individuals who need food assistance may hesitate to seek help. They may experience feelings of shame or embarrassment due to circumstances that are out of their control.

Sources:

houstonfoodbank

Hunger101
Activity #4
Hunger Simulation

Age Group
High school and up

Description
Participants will realize why food insecurity is so common in our community through a simulation activity.

Materials Needed
- 3-5 tables (any size)
- 25-30 chairs
- Enough pencils for each participant/group
- A calculator for each participant/group is recommended (You can encourage participants to bring their own.)
- Timer
- Whistle
- Sticky notes
- Printed station signs
- Printed station manager instruction sheets
- 8-12 printed copies of the grocery store menu
- Enough copies of the worksheet for each participant/group

Time
30-60 minutes
Activity #4 continued  Hunger Simulation

Set-up

• Provide instruction sheets (pp. 23-25) to 3-6 designated station managers. For larger groups, it’s recommended to have two managers at each station.

• Print station signs (pp. 26-31, including the ‘Take a Number’ and ‘Open’ and ‘Closed’ signs) and decide how you will display them on each table. (Tabletop sign holders are best if you have access to them, but the signs can also be taped to the tables.)

• Write out sequential numbers on a 1.5” x 2” sticky pad. There should be one number written on each sheet of the pad, and then the pad can be affixed to the ‘Take a Number’ sign. It’s best to not start with the number 1 so that there’s a feel of continuation.

• Set up a table for each station, with one or two accompanying chairs – depending on the number of people you plan to have managing each station. Near the SNAP office, set up several rows of chairs to serve as a waiting room. If possible, set up one or two extra tables near the grocery store for the store menus. Spread copies of the grocery store menu (p. 32) out on nearby tables, or at the grocery store station table, if no other tables are available.

• Print copies of the worksheet (pp. 33-36) for participants. The worksheets should be printed front and back, then cut down the center. There are 4 available profiles. These should be distributed at random to participants. More than one participant/group will have the same profile.

Sample Layout

[Diagram of sample layout]
Activity #4 continued  Hunger Simulation

Simulation

• Give the following introduction to the participants:
  1. If you are working in groups, all members of the group represent the same person, so you must stay together throughout the activity. You can’t go to two different stations at the same time.
  2. Each participant/group will get a worksheet.
  3. On the worksheet you’ll see the profile of the person you represent. All of these are individuals who struggle with food insecurity.
  4. You’ll also see the number of calories your person’s family would need to eat in order to have a healthy active month according to the United States Department of Agriculture. This is just an easy way to measure how much food energy your family needs in order to not go hungry.
  5. The third thing you’ll see on the worksheets is a breakdown of the expenses your person needs to cover before he or she can start buying food.

• Pass out the worksheets, pencils, and calculators. Give the participants a few minutes to read over their profiles and to use the equation at the bottom of the worksheet to calculate their weekly food budgets.

• Give the following directions to the participants:
  1. For this simulation, your goal is to get all of your calories for one week. If you fail to get all of those calories, this means that you and your family have gone hungry on some level.
  2. For the sake of this simulation, your week has been condensed down to 15 minutes. I’ll blow the whistle to begin the simulation – which will signal that you can stand up and begin, and 15 minutes later I’ll blow the whistle again, at which point you need to come sit down again. There’s no leniency here. When the 15 minutes are over, if you don’t have your calories, it’s too late. The week has ended and you haven’t eaten.
  3. You’ll keep track of all of your money and calories on the back of your worksheet. Be sure to keep your pencil and calculator with you. You’ll need them.
  4. If you get all of your calories, bring your worksheet to the grocery store to check out. Also visit the grocery store if you have any questions.

• You can explain the three stations participants can visit during the simulation, or just indicate that there are several different options, depending on the age of the participants. (Letting adult participants figure it out on their own can be more effective, but for younger participants, it helps to have a little guidance before jumping in.)

• Emphasize that it’s possible for each of the available profiles to get all of the calories, and that participants should take it as seriously as possible.

• Ask if there are any questions. Start the timer and blow the whistle to begin the simulation.

• For more information on the actual simulation process, see the station manager instruction sheets.

• At the end of the 15 minutes, blow the whistle again and have the participants return to their seats for a wrap up discussion.
Activity #4 continued  Hunger Simulation

Discussion

It’s not necessary to cover all of these points. Just let the conversation move organically and be sure to hit the points that you feel are most important.

• Who got all of their calories? What was your biggest help? Were you able to create a grocery list of balanced healthy options for your household?

• Texas is one of the hungriest states in the country. It is also one of the most obese. Why do you think that is? Did you notice what the cheapest calories at the grocery store were? It was the cookies. Imagine if you only had $1.50 to buy your dinner tonight. Would you take it to the produce section of the grocery store or the fast food dollar menu? Healthy food is more expensive and that’s something that affects people who struggle with food insecurity.

• For those groups who couldn’t get your calories, why not? What were your biggest challenges? What was most frustrating? How did that make you feel?

• In order to apply for SNAP benefits in Texas, the first thing you have to do is fill out an application to apply and you have to make sure that you have all the necessary documents. You have to get permission to even apply for the program. Office hours are only during work hours. Because this program is funded by tax revenue, there’s only a limited amount of money available, so many people who need help don’t qualify for SNAP benefits.

• The Houston Food Bank works with some 600 feeding programs. These include food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, rehabilitation centers, schools, and a variety of other organizations.

The majority of these are run by volunteers, and are only open when those volunteers are available to run them. There are people working to solve this problem, but for many Texans those extra resources may not be available during a time that’s reasonable for them to take advantage of it.
Activity #4 continued  Hunger Simulation

Discussion, continued

• The purpose of this exercise is for you to really understand what it means to live with food insecurity. On any given day, 66,000 people in southeast Texas experience the pain of hunger and have no food. One in four children in southeast Texas is food insecure, or at risk of being hungry; overall, one in five people are food insecure. This doesn’t just mean people who are homeless. Only 3% of people served by the Houston Food Bank’s partner agencies are homeless.

There might be people in this room who live with food insecurity. Your next door neighbor, your teachers, coworkers, and friends might, but the good news is that you can help. You can volunteer at the Houston Food Bank or at another organization that helps alleviate hunger. You can also donate food or funds. Every dollar donated to the Houston Food Bank equals 3 more nutritious meals going out to hungry people.

Most importantly, you can advocate. Now you have a little bit of knowledge about this topic. Take it and share it. Do you think your friends and family know that Texas is one of the hungriest states in the nation or that 1 in 5 Texans struggle with food insecurity? I bet they don’t. Go tell them, and while you’re at it, tell them that you know a way for them to help fight hunger. Tell them to volunteer, to donate, or to spread the word.

• The Houston Food Bank’s Social Services Outreach Program (SSOP) helps people sign up for SNAP and other state-funded social services. (see SSOP fact sheet)
SNAP Office
Station Manager Instructions

At the SNAP office, participants can apply for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits, commonly referred to as food stamps.

• Have each participant/group that approaches your station take a number and sit in the waiting room. Be aware of the starting number, and keep an eye on the clock. The objective is for each participant to sit in the waiting room for at least 3 minutes before their number is called, but not longer than 5 minutes. If the waiting room fills up quickly, once the initial 3 minute wait time has passed, process the participants as quickly as you’re able so that nobody loses too much time in the waiting room. Keep an eye out, in case any new participants take numbers and sit in the waiting room during this time. They still need to wait for at least 3 minutes before they’re called.

• Call the participants/groups up one at a time and using the numbers they selected. Conduct the following interview with them:

    1. What is your name?
    2. How many people are there in your household?
    3. Who are they?
    4. Do you work? If so, what do you do?
    5. How much do you earn each week?
    6. Does your household have any additional income? If so, what and how much?

• After the interview, record the weekly benefits in the SNAP Benefits section of the participant/group’s worksheet, based on the highlighted section below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Food Budget</th>
<th>Calorie Goal</th>
<th>Household</th>
<th>Soup Kitchen Calories</th>
<th>SNAP Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alisha</td>
<td>$276</td>
<td>$33.12</td>
<td>24,000</td>
<td>1 adult, 1 child</td>
<td>11,200</td>
<td>$54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brittany</td>
<td>$632</td>
<td>$56.88</td>
<td>33,600</td>
<td>1 adult, 2 children</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>$0 (income is too high)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jose</td>
<td>$385</td>
<td>$46.20</td>
<td>39,200</td>
<td>2 adults, 1 child</td>
<td>17,600</td>
<td>$0 (income is too high)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raymond</td>
<td>$74</td>
<td>$8.88</td>
<td>17,500</td>
<td>1 adult</td>
<td>6,400</td>
<td>$48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Soup Kitchen
Station Manager Instructions

At the soup kitchen, participants can get free meals.

- The soup kitchen isn’t always open; you must keep an eye on the clock. The simulation will run for 15 minutes. Follow this minute-by-minute breakdown as closely as you can:

  Minutes 1–3 Closed
  Minutes 4–8 Open
  Minutes 9–12 Closed
  Minutes 13–15 Open

When the soup kitchen is closed, put out the Closed sign and walk away from the soup kitchen station so that it’s clear that nobody is there to help right now.

When the soup kitchen is open, put out the Open sign and help participants in the order that they arrive at your station.

- Ask each participant/group the following questions:
  1. What is your name?
  2. How many adults and children are there in your family?

- Inform each group that you’re happy to help them and record their calories in the Soup Kitchen Calories section of the participant/group’s worksheet, based on the highlighted section below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Food Budget</th>
<th>Calorie Goal</th>
<th>Household</th>
<th>Soup Kitchen Calories</th>
<th>SNAP Benefits</th>
</tr>
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<td>2 adults 1 child</td>
<td>17,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raymond</td>
<td>$74</td>
<td>$8.88</td>
<td>17,500</td>
<td>1 adult</td>
<td>6,400</td>
<td>$48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At the grocery store, participants can select and purchase groceries, ask questions, and get confirmation of their calories. (It is a good idea to have a calculator at this station.)

- When participants approach your table, ask what you can help them with. If the participants want to go grocery shopping, direct them to use the grocery store menus to fill out the shopping list on the back of the worksheet.

- If participants have questions, answer them as best as you can, but bear in mind that you represent a grocery store clerk. Don’t answer questions that participants should be figuring out on their own, like inquiries about the wait time at the SNAP office or when the soup kitchen will open. Generally, stick to helping participants with math questions. If you have participants who seem completely lost and unsure of what to do next, remind them that there are three different stations they can visit, and that they can change their grocery list if necessary, but don’t offer more help than that.

- If participants say they are finished grocery shopping, check to see if they added up the Groceries Total Price and Groceries Total Calories on the back of their worksheet. Double check their math, if you think it may be necessary. The table at the right has the same information as the grocery store menu.

- If participants say they have all their calories, make sure they’ve filled out all of the spaces on the back of the worksheet (SNAP Benefits and Soup Kitchen Calories are optional spaces and may be left blank.) Double check their math, especially their grocery list. If time is short or you have a long line, glancing through for obvious errors is enough. Especially keep an eye out for dropped decimal spaces. It’s common to have participants think they’re finished when they really only have 10% of their calories. The following information may come in handy while checking participant’s work, or answering questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Calories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bread</td>
<td>$2.50</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canned beans</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cookies</td>
<td>$2.50</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh fruit</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frozen vegetables</td>
<td>$2.50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground meat</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>$2.50</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Food Budget</th>
<th>Calorie Goal</th>
<th>Household</th>
<th>Soup Kitchen Calories</th>
<th>SNAP Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alisha</td>
<td>$276</td>
<td>$33.12</td>
<td>24,000</td>
<td>1 adult 1 child</td>
<td>11,200</td>
<td>$54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brittany</td>
<td>$632</td>
<td>$56.88</td>
<td>33,600</td>
<td>1 adult 2 children</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>$0 (income is too high)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jose</td>
<td>$385</td>
<td>$46.20</td>
<td>39,200</td>
<td>2 adults 1 child</td>
<td>17,600</td>
<td>$0 (income is too high)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raymond</td>
<td>$74</td>
<td>$8.88</td>
<td>17,500</td>
<td>1 adult</td>
<td>6,400</td>
<td>$48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Take a Number
Soup Kitchen
OPEN
Grocery Stock List

Frozen vegetables
$2.50
100 calories

Bread
$2.50
900 calories

Ground meat
$5
800 calories

Milk
$2.50
900 calories

Fresh fruit
$1
100 calories

Cookies
$2.50
1,000 calories

Frozen vegetables
$2.50
100 calories

Bread
$2.50
900 calories

Ground meat
$5
800 calories

Milk
$2.50
900 calories

Fresh fruit
$1
100 calories

Cookies
$2.50
1,000 calories
**Hunger Simulation**

**Profile**

**Your name is Raymond.**
You are a 24-year-old war veteran living in Tomball, TX. Because of a military injury and limited job skills, you are unable to find employment. You split your time between staying at city shelters and single resident occupancy hotels. 
Your weekly income is $74 in benefits from the department of Veterans Affairs.

**You need 17,500 calories.**
According to the USDA, this is the number of calories you will need to have a healthy week, based on the average height and weight of people of your same age and gender.

**Weekly Expenses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>$12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities/phone</td>
<td>$9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus/cab fare</td>
<td>$14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General expenses</td>
<td>$18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fill in the boxes in the following equation to find your weekly food budget, and add it to the statement at the bottom of the page.

\[
\text{Weekly Income} - \text{Weekly Expenses} = \text{Food Budget}
\]

You have $_______ to get 17,500 calories.

**Goal**

**Weekly Expenses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>$190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities/phone</td>
<td>$46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto payment/expenses</td>
<td>$97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General expenses</td>
<td>$46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fill in the boxes in the following equation to find your family’s weekly food budget, and add it to the statement at the bottom of the page.

\[
\text{Weekly Income} - \text{Weekly Expenses} = \text{Food Budget}
\]

You have $_______ to get 17,500 calories.

---

**Hunger Simulation**

**Profile**

**Your name is Brittany.**
You are a 36-year-old single mother. You have an 11-year-old daughter and a 3-year-old son who live with you in a rental house in Houston, TX. You have a college degree and work full time as an insurance claims adjuster, but you’ve had trouble making ends meet since your husband left two years ago.

After taxes, your family’s weekly income is $632.

**Your family needs 33,600 calories.**
According to the USDA, this is the number of calories your family will need to have a healthy week, based on the average height and weight of people in the same age and gender as your family members.

**Weekly Expenses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>$190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities/phone</td>
<td>$46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto payment/expenses</td>
<td>$97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General expenses</td>
<td>$46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fill in the boxes in the following equation to find your family’s weekly food budget, and add it to the statement at the bottom of the page.

\[
\text{Weekly Income} - \text{Weekly Expenses} = \text{Food Budget}
\]

You have $_______ to get 33,600 calories.
## Groceries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>How many?</th>
<th>Total price</th>
<th>Total calories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bread</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canned beans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cookies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh fruit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frozen vegetables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground meat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Totals

**Food Budget**
(from front of page)

**Calorie Goal**
(from front of page)

**Groceries Total Price**

**Groceries Total Calories**

**SNAP Benefits**

**How much money do you have left?**

**Soup Kitchen Calories**

**How many more calories do you need?**

**How much money do you have left?**

**Equals**

**Equals**

**Plus**

**Plus**

**Minus**

**Minus**

**Equals**

**Equals**

**Plus**

**Plus**

**Minus**

**Minus**

**Equals**

**Equals**

**Plus**

**Plus**

**Minus**

**Minus**

**Equals**

**Equals**
Your name is Jose.
You are 28 years old. You immigrated to Galveston, TX from Guatemala with your wife and 5-year-old son. You live in Section 8 housing. Two months ago your car broke down and you haven’t had the money to fix it. You work full time at a local restaurant. Your wife works part time at a hotel on the other side of town. You both make minimum wage.
Your weekly income after taxes is $385.

Your family needs 39,200 calories.
According to the USDA, this is the number of calories your family will need to have a healthy week, based on the average height and weight of people in the same age and gender as your family members.

Weekly Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>$127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities/phone</td>
<td>$41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus/cab fare</td>
<td>$23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare</td>
<td>$69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General expenses</td>
<td>$46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fill in the boxes in the following equation to find your family’s weekly food budget, and add it to the statement at the bottom of the page.

Weekly Income - Weekly Expenses = Food Budget

You have $________ to get 39,200 calories.

Your name is Alisha.
You are a 67-year-old grandmother living in a small apartment in Richmond, TX. You’ve had custody of your 9-year-old granddaughter for eight years because your son was unable to provide a safe home. To supplement your late husband’s Social Security check, you work part time as a department store greeter while your granddaughter is in school.
Your weekly income after taxes is $276.

Your family needs 24,000 calories.
According to the USDA, this is the number of calories your family will need to have a healthy week, based on the average height and weight of people in the same age and gender as your family members.

Weekly Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>$122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities/phone</td>
<td>$20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto expenses</td>
<td>$28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General expenses</td>
<td>$17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fill in the boxes in the following equation to find your family’s weekly food budget, and add it to the statement at the bottom of the page.

Weekly Income - Weekly Expenses = Food Budget

You have $________ to get 24,000 calories.
### Groceries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>How many?</th>
<th>Total price</th>
<th>Total calories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bread</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canned beans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cookies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh fruit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frozen vegetables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground meat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Totals

- **Food Budget** (from front of page)
- **Calorie Goal** (from front of page)
- **Groceries Total Price**
- **Groceries Total Calories**
- **SNAP Benefits**
- **Soup Kitchen Calories**
- **How much money do you have left?**
- **How many more calories do you need?**

- Minus
- Plus
- Equals
Program Overview

Houston Food Bank’s Social Services Outreach Program (SSOP) is focused on raising awareness in the service area of available social services and provides application and technical assistance for state-funded social and health services.

Application Assistance at the
Houston Food Bank, 535 Portwall Street

Anyone who wishes to apply for state-funded benefits may come to the SSOP offices in the Houston Food Bank, east of downtown. We have a kid-friendly waiting area and staff who are ready to guide people through the process.

Application Assistance in the Community

Alternatively, SSOP staff travel to social service agencies in 12 counties and provide outreach and application assistance for state benefits programs. An outreach team hosts and attends community events in our target counties, provides information, and offers application assistance for state benefits.

SSOP staff can submit applications electronically to the State. SSOP staff may issue Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards to clients in order to expedite receipt of benefits after eligibility has been approved on the State level.

Services are available in English and Spanish, and may be provided in other languages via state interpretation services as needed.

SSOP Hours of Operation at the
Houston Food Bank

Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Saturday 8:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Telephone Hotline 832-369-9390

Hours of Operation

Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Saturday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Contact

Social Services Helpline
832-369-9390

Client interviews take 30 minutes to an hour on average.

SSOP staff travel to more than 90 sites to conduct SNAP client interviews and provide application assistance.

In the Houston Food Bank service area, almost 60% of SNAP participants are children.
**Activity #5**  
Community and Government Responses to Hunger

**Age Group**  
Middle school and up

**Description**  
Participants will identify, learn about, and list various community and government responses to hunger. They will learn how various programs work and gain an understanding of how they themselves can respond to hunger in their community.

**Materials Needed**  
- White board  
- Writing utensils

**Time**  
15 minutes

**Activity Directions**  
- Divide participants into two groups.

- Ask one group to come up with a list of community responses to hunger and the other group to create a list of government responses to hunger. Some audiences may have more knowledge than others. It’s important to explain that this is a brainstorm activity, and there are no wrong answers.

  You may have to give some examples: An example of a community response to hunger is a food pantry or a homeless shelter. An example of a government response is the establishment of the food stamp program (now called SNAP).

- Ask each group to select a spokesperson.

- Once each group has reported, review and see if you can add any from the list below.

- Go over discussion questions as a large group.
Government Programs

Federal Nutrition Programs

The following government programs assist individuals and households:

**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps)** helps low-income individuals and families purchase food. More than half of food stamps recipients are children. Food stamps cannot be used to buy important non-food items (like toilet paper or soap). The average monthly SNAP benefits per person in Texas for 2015 was $115.05. This breaks down to approximately $3.78 per person per day.

**WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children)** is a program that provides low-income pregnant women, new mothers, infants and pre-school children with nutritious foods, nutrition education, and improved access to health care in order to prevent nutrition-related health problems in pregnancy, infancy and early childhood.

**School and Summer Meals (National School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program, and the Summer Food Program)** are subsidized programs that assist low income children to improve their nutritional status. These meals are available during the school year as well as during the summer months. However, only 1 out of 8 children who receive school meals participate in summer feeding for various reasons, such as lack of transportation.

The following government programs assist community organizations such as shelters and after school programs:

**Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)** provides resources to feed children in after school, homeless, and preschool programs.

**The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)** provides USDA commodity food to states that distribute the food through local emergency food providers like food banks.

**Commodity Supplement Food Program (CSFP)** provides a box filled with USDA commodity foods once per month to a low income senior.

For more information regarding the programs listed above and other Federal Nutrition Programs, visit: www.fns.usda.gov.
Activity #5 continued  Community and Government Responses to Hunger

Government Programs

Government Programs that Respond to Poverty

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) In August 1996, what many people knew as “welfare” changed in the United States: it became Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. The new system includes a series of block grants administered by state governments. There is a limited amount of time that a person can receive assistance. In the state of Texas, the total amount of time the parent or relative can receive TANF ranges from 12 to 36 months and is based on his or her education, work experience, and personal or economic situation. There are no time limits for children. All TANF recipients are required to engage in some type of “work activity” to receive the benefit.

For more information about the TANF Program in Texas, including the specific qualifications and benefits, visit www.yourtexasbenefits.hhsc.tx.gov

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a refundable federal income tax credit for low-income working individuals and families. Congress originally approved the tax credit legislation in 1975 to offset the burden of Social Security taxes and to provide an incentive to work. When the EITC exceeds the amount of taxes owed, it results in a tax refund to those who claim and qualify for the credit.

To qualify, taxpayers must earn income from working and meet other requirements. They also must file a tax return, even if they did not earn enough money to be obligated to file a tax return.

The EITC has no effect on certain welfare benefits. In most cases, EITC payments will not be used to determine eligibility for Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), food stamps, low-income housing or most Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) payments.

For more information about EITC, visit: www.irs.gov
Activity #5 continued  Community and Government Responses to Hunger

Community Responses to Hunger

Food Drive A community-wide effort sponsored by schools, faith-based groups, businesses, organizations, grocery stores, TV stations, food banks, and more, in which members of the community donate non-perishable food.

Food Bank A non-governmental charitable organization that distributes food to food pantries, shelters, soup kitchens or other organizations to help feed the hungry. The Houston Food Bank is one of 200 food banks in the United States, and the largest in both food distribution and facility size.

Food Pantry A place where those in need of food assistance receive a supply of food to take home and cook. Food is usually acquired from food banks and distributed through community centers and churches.

Meals on Wheels A food delivery program that delivers one meal a day to elderly people or homebound people who are very ill and unable to leave their homes.

Shelter A place that temporarily houses homeless people or those escaping from domestic violence, usually overnight, sometimes for long stretches of time. Meals are usually served. Some shelters serve families; some serve individuals.

Soup Kitchen A place where a hungry and/or poor person receives a free meal. Most soup kitchens are housed in churches or community buildings.
Activity #5 continued  Community and Government Responses to Hunger

Discussion Questions

• Were you previously aware of any of these different community and government responses to hunger? If so, which ones?

• Look at your group’s specific family scenarios. For which government/community resources might your family be eligible, or which ones should that family seek out?

• To receive most government assistance, whether it’s SNAP or TANF, requires meeting certain eligibility criteria. These criteria may include having children and earning less than a certain income level. What are some ways that having to meet criteria is helpful? What are ways that having to meet criteria could be harmful?

    Possible answer: Eligibility criteria can help to streamline access and screen for highest need, but it can also restrict access to programs for people in need who exceed income limits.

• Some community responses to hunger and poverty (shelters, pantry programs, etc.) have established criteria to determine if they can serve an individual or family. For instance, some pantries will only see individuals who reside in a specific zip code or area, or who come to them with specific referrals. Why do you think programs establish this type of criteria?

    Possible answer: Many small non-profits/churches don’t have the financial or volunteer support they need in order to serve everyone who comes to them. In some instances, they are working in collaboration with other non-profits/churches in their area and have established clear “lines of service”.

• There are conflicting thoughts and opinions regarding government involvement in poverty and hunger issues. Prior to the Great Depression, there was no government involvement in these issues. There were “poor houses” or “work houses” and each community would decide how it would respond to those in need. What changes do you think would occur in this country if there was no government response to hunger?

• Given what you have learned, do you think these programs are adequate solutions to solve hunger in our community?

• Each of these responses help, but it is not a fully integrated and perfect approach. What can you do to help fight hunger in our community?