



factsheet

Food for Change

Food can mean more than just a meal.

As our vision for the future of food banking, Food for Change is an innovative strategy that goes beyond emergency food assistance to address the root causes of hunger. The Houston Food Bank is at the forefront of efforts by food banks to use food as a catalyst – in partnership with social service programs – to help individuals achieve their life goals.

An essential aspect of the Food for Change strategy is the use of data to study outcomes in two focus areas: health-related and economic opportunities.



Health-related opportunities

Health-related initiatives are intended to improve quality of life for participants through programs that help them manage health care needs.

- HFB is taking a leadership role in raising awareness among health sector professionals about the importance of screening patients for food insecurity as a key factor in wellness.
- We are creating a system for linking those patients who are identified as food insecure to food pantries and SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) application assistance.
- Through Food Rx, participants in health programming receive “prescriptions” for produce and other healthy foods to redeem at designated food pantries.

Economic opportunities

Economic initiatives are intended to “shorten the line” at hunger relief charities by helping clients achieve family financial stability. The Houston Food Bank participates through food scholarships. Food scholarship recipients supplement their household budgets through regular visits to designated food pantries for supplies of nutritious produce, protein and nonperishables. Partnership examples include:

- **Education** In community colleges and universities, the goal is to help food insecure students complete and earn certifications and/or degrees so they can find living wage jobs.
- **Financial literacy** Families learn how to budget and plan for the future so they can develop a savings account, improve credit and reduce debt.
- **Housing** Families living in affordable housing settings participate in reading programs so children can succeed in school and complete an education that leads to employment.
- **Workforce development** In partnership with employers, working adults enroll in a program to learn the skills needed to find higher-paying jobs.

Strategic change = better future

As the Houston Food Bank’s Food for Change strategy gathers and analyzes data through our research and academic partnerships, we can make better informed decisions about how we use our resources. We believe that the wise use of food equates to better quality of life for individuals who have struggled with food insecurity. Ultimately, we will integrate the strategy across all operations while placing the wellbeing of clients at the center of all we do.

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