

September 2025

HUNGER ACTION MONTH TOOLKIT





MAKING TOMORROW POSSIBLE THIS HUNGER ACTION MONTH™

Hunger is more than an individual challenge – it's a systemic issue that touches every corner of the 21 counties served by the Central Texas Food Bank (CTFB). While food insecurity exists in every community, the barriers to access vary. From urban neighborhoods with limited fresh food options (food deserts) to rural areas far from grocery stores, the challenges are complex. Addressing hunger requires innovative, community-centered solutions that meet people where they are – leveraging partnerships, empowering local programs, and strengthening food systems to build a healthier, more nourished Central Texas.

Each Hunger Action Month (HAM), we come together to educate, inspire, and mobilize our community – spotlighting the shared solutions that make a lasting difference in the lives of our neighbors.

THIS TOOLKIT IS YOUR GUIDE TO HOW YOU CAN HELP US MAKE TOMORROW POSSIBLE FOR NEIGHBORS ACROSS CENTRAL TEXAS.



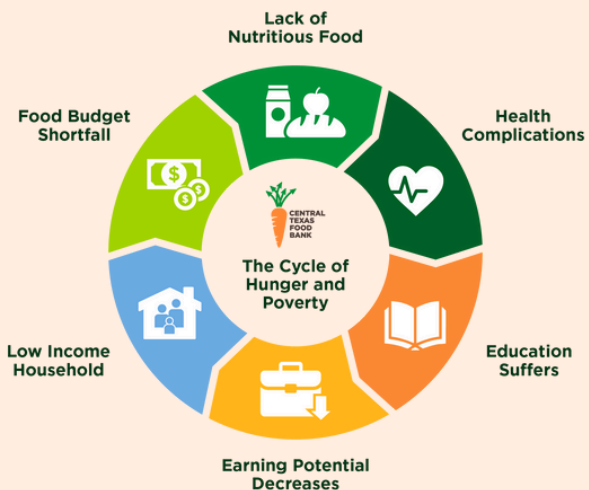
THE STATE OF HUNGER IN CENTRAL TEXAS

Texas faces one of the highest rates of food insecurity in the nation, currently ranking second. Today, nearly 17% of Texans lack consistent access to enough food, a sobering reflection of the challenges so many families face. CTFB's 21-county service area includes 10% of the state's food-insecure population.

Hunger can affect anyone – it does not discriminate. It impacts families, children, older adults, students, and working individuals. While often associated with urban environments, hunger in rural communities can be even more complex – compounded by longer travel times, fewer grocery options, and limited food assistance resources.



The Cycle of Hunger and Poverty



Behind every missed meal are deeper systemic challenges: poverty, inflation, rising housing costs, inflation, and inequitable access to nutritious food. When reliable access to food is out of reach, it's harder to stay healthy, focus in school, keep a job, or plan for the future.

Food insecurity also points to larger cracks in the food system itself. When local food production, access, and affordability fall short, entire communities become more reliant on emergency food, and health outcomes suffer. That's why we are committed to more than short-term relief. We're investing in long-term solutions that strengthen local food systems and improve access for all.

To ensure our work stays rooted in the real experiences of our neighbors, we regularly conduct surveys and Food Access Community Needs Assessments (CNAs) across our service area. These surveys provide vital, hyper-local insights that guide our strategies and deepen our understanding of what's needed to make tomorrow possible for every Central Texan.

“My mom didn’t qualify [for SNAP]. She was over by \$13. On a fixed income. How is she going to buy food and pay her bills? Live? You just get tired of hearing the ‘No’s.’”

- Travis County Neighbor



**1 IN 4
CHILDREN**

“We’re barely making it. [We need] some help, the low-income families, [to] kind of adjust and survive in this increase, this inflation.”

- Williamson County Neighbor



**1 IN 5
ADULTS**

“I’ve always lived paycheck to paycheck. It’s just been me and four kids [...] But after COVID, it’s more on my brain. Before [...] a next-door neighbor would [say] ‘Oh we have extra [food]’ or something – it’d always seem to work out. Now it’s like, everybody’s in that pinch.”

- Waco Neighbor



**1 IN 6
OLDER
ADULTS**

These numbers offer a glimpse into neighbors' experiences gathered through our Food Access Community Needs Assessments (CNA) in the City of Waco, and Bastrop, Hays, Travis, and Williamson counties, including neighbors who do not receive CTFB's services. The CNAs capture an on-the-ground, hyper-local picture of assets, challenges and opportunities, providing a deeper understanding of the experiences with food insecurity in our region and elevating community voices to inform evidence-based solutions. View all CNA reports here: centraltxfoodsystem.org/the-dashboard#cna.

“I’ve been a single mom [since] 2004. I didn’t have a lot of money to work with because I had all these bills [to] pay, and I had to make sure I was covering them. [...School meals] were a godsend to help my kids get lunch every day.”

– Hays Neighbor

“With seniors, a lot of them have food insecurities. They choose between medicine and food — especially fresh produce, which is often the last thing they buy if they have any money left.”

– Bastrop Partner

Food Insecurity Across Our Region



One Emergency Away

Two in five neighbors (or 38%) experiencing food insecurity could not afford an unexpected \$400 emergency.



Meals Missed Often

Two in three neighbors (or 64%) cut the size of meals or skipped meals in the last 12 months because there wasn't enough money for food.



Health Strains


One in two neighbors (or 50%) reported having someone in their household with a chronic illness; about 30% have someone in the household with a disability.



Costly Tradeoffs

One in three neighbors (or 33%) reported not being able to easily access transportation to buy groceries; about the same amount report having to make tradeoffs between food and other basic needs (housing, transportation, and utilities) every single month.





Hunger isn't caused by a single issue, and it can't be solved by a single solution. That's why our approach is comprehensive, community-informed, and rooted in long-term impact.

We provide immediate access to food, partner with local organizations, invest in sustainable solutions, and advocate for systems-level change.

Together, here's how we're making tomorrow possible:

Direct Food Distribution: We deliver nutritious food where it's needed most — whether that's a rural neighborhood, senior housing complex, or school campus.

- **Mobile Pantries bring fresh food to high-need areas across our 21-county region.**
- **School Pantries support students and families with easy access to groceries on campus.**
- **Home Delivery programs reach neighbors facing mobility or transportation challenges.**
- **Senior Programs provide older adults with age-appropriate, reliable nutrition support.**

Partner Network: We power a network of more than 250 partner agencies, including food pantries, shelters, and meal programs, to extend our reach and ensure every community has access to nourishing food. Together, we deliver culturally relevant, community-based care.

Targeted Support for Vulnerable Populations: No two neighbors experience food insecurity the same way. That's why we tailor our programs to meet the unique needs of:

- **Children and youth**
- **College students**
- **Older adults**
- **Working families and low-income households**
- **Veterans and active military members**

These efforts help reduce stigma, remove barriers, and deliver the right support at the right time.

Food Rescue + Waste Reduction: Each year, we rescue millions of pounds of surplus food from retailers and food service partners, redistributing it to neighbors in need. This work feeds families while reducing environmental impact.

Collaboration for Greater Impact: We partner with healthcare providers, school districts, local governments, and businesses to expand food access through innovative, community-led programs.

Policy + Advocacy: We advocate for policies that protect and expand access to nutritious food. Our policy work focuses on:

- **Protecting and expanding access to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), and Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP).**
- **Supporting a thriving local food economy.**
- **Advancing equity-driven solutions to the root causes of hunger.**

YOUR ACTION MAKES A DIFFERENCE

To truly take action, it helps to understand what food insecurity looks and feels like — and how it connects to broader systems. Hunger isn't just about missing a meal. It's about making tough choices between food and medicine, rent, or transportation. It's about navigating limited access, rising prices, and complex policies. Deepening your understanding helps build empathy and drives more informed, effective advocacy.

Take the SNAP Challenge

Live on the average daily SNAP budget (about \$6 a day per person) for one week. This simple yet powerful activity helps illustrate the tough choices millions of families face every day.



Do a Pantry Staples Cooking Challenge

Cook a meal using only shelf-stable items you already have in your pantry. Or go one step further: post a "before" picture of a single pantry item (like a can of beans or bag of rice), and an "after" photo showing the creative meal you made with it. Encourage others to try it too!

Explore the Central Texas Food System

Dive into the Central Texas Food System Dashboard to learn how food is grown, distributed, and accessed in our region. Explore curated research, county-level data, and tools like Food Access Community Needs Assessments (CNAs), FACT Sheets, and the "Food for Thought" series. This resource connects the dots between food access, health, economics, and the environment, helping us understand what it takes to build a stronger, more equitable food system. Get started at centraltxfoodsystem.org/resources.

Volunteer

Give your time and make a direct impact by helping out in our garden, kitchen, warehouse or at mobile pantries. Whether you're contributing individually or with a group, volunteering is a hands-on way to help your neighbors facing hunger. Sign up now at centraltexasfoodbank.org/volunteer.

Host a Food + Fund Drive

Collect non-perishable food from your neighbors, coworkers, or community, or start a Virtual Food Drive to maximize impact. Every dollar you raise helps us provide three meals.

Activate + Advocate

Contact Your Elected Officials

Your voice matters. Urge your lawmakers to pass a strong, bipartisan Farm Bill that protects vital programs like SNAP, TEFAP, and CSFP — tools that help millions of people put food on the table for their families.

Not sure where to start? Share your story, call their office, or send an email using our easy advocacy tools. Speaking up is one of the most impactful ways to support long-term hunger solutions. Find your local representative at wrm.capitol.texas.gov/home.

Support Local Food Systems

A healthy, resilient food system starts close to home. Support local farmers, growers, and producers by shopping at farmers markets or choosing locally sourced items when you can.

Every dollar spent helps strengthen the regional food economy and creates more equitable access to fresh, nutritious food across Central Texas. It's a small step with long-term impact.

Want to get creative? Host a documentary night, potluck, or other themed event to bring people together while supporting hunger relief. It's a simple, powerful way to make a difference.

30 WAYS IN 30 DAYS: SEPTEMBER HUNGER ACTION MONTH CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 It's Labor Day: Share information about our free Workforce Training Programs!	2 Every follow counts! Follow us and share our Hunger Action Month posts all month long.	3 It's Whataburger Wednesday! Donate at the register to receive a free Whataburger coupon.	4 Download and share one of our social media graphics to show you're committed to food security.	5 It's National Food Bank Day. Tell a friend why you love CTFB.	6 Visit a farmer's market and shout out your favorite local farmer!
7 Try our Pantry Staples Cooking Challenge (make a meal from only shelf stable items).	8 Comment "🍌" on a CTFB post if you love what we do.	9 It's Hunger Action Day! Wear orange and spread awareness about how to reduce hunger in your community.	10 Download our HAM toolkit and email it to a friend or share around your office.	11 It's the National Day of Service. Register to for a volunteer shift with us.	12 Tell someone in your life about CTFB's work.	13 Share one surprising hunger stat with a friend that changed how you think.
14 It's Food is Medicine Day. Make one of our healthy garden sample recipes for dinner tonight and nourish your body.	15 Share one reason you care about hunger in Central Texas on social.	16 It's National Voter Registration Day. Advocate for positive solutions that hunger.	17 Share one of CTFB's social posts about Hunger Action Month.	18 Take a walk and think about food access in your neighborhood.	19 Add a "Donate to CTFB" sticker to your Insta story.	20 Post a "why I give" story and share with your social circle.
21 Take a pic of your lunch and give a hunger fact in the caption.	22 Share a quote from a neighbor story that moved you.	23 Share your favorite recipe that stretches a dollar.	24 Register for our "State of Hunger" webinar.	25 Tell a coworker what you've learned this month about hunger in Central Texas.	26 Volunteer in CTFB's garden.	27 Try a "no-spend" dinner night using only what you already have on hand.
28 Invite your social circle to learn about food insecurity.	29 Send a thank-you message to a CTFB volunteer or team member.	30 It's Pet Hunger Awareness Day. Post a photo of your pet dressed in orange and tag us!				

COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT: GUIDANCE, RESOURCES + INSPIRATION

Let's get loud this September. Hunger is affecting more of our Central Texas neighbors than you might realize, and your voice can help change that. Whether you're online, at work, or out in the community, you have the power to raise awareness and inspire action.

- **Tell your story.** Share a personal experience with food insecurity, or why reducing hunger matters to you. You can submit your story on our website to inspire others.
- **Post hunger facts on social media.** Use our ready-to-share graphics and key stats to educate your followers and spark conversation.
- **Encourage friends and family to volunteer or donate.** A simple ask goes a long way. We provide shareable links and language to help you invite others to take action.
- **Host a Lunch & Learn.** Raise awareness at your workplace with a short presentation about hunger in Central Texas. We've created a deck you can use to get the conversation started.
- **Wear orange.** Orange is the color of hunger awareness. Rock your orange gear all month long - especially on Hunger Action Day, September 9 - and tag @ctxfoodbank to show your support.
- **Use your voice.** Share your commitment on social media to encourage others to join you. Make sure to use #CTFBHungerActionMonth.
- **Engage with CTFB online.** Follow us on social, like and engage with our posts, and help connect more people to food assistance. Every share helps spread the word.



THE FACTS ABOUT HUNGER IN CENTRAL TEXAS

By The Numbers

- CTFB's 21-county service area includes 10% of the state's food insecure population.
- 610,000 Central Texans experience food insecurity. That means 1 in 4 children and 1 in 6 older adults struggle to access food on a regular basis.
- **Health Strains:** 50% of neighbors experiencing food insecurity reported having someone in their household with a chronic illness; about 30% have someone in the household with a disability.

The Cost of Hunger

- **One Emergency Away:** Two in four neighbors experiencing food insecurity could not handle an unexpected \$400 emergency.
- **Costly Tradeoffs:** One in three neighbors reported not being able to easily access transportation to buy groceries; about the same amount report having to make tradeoffs between food and other costs such as housing, transportation, insurance, and utilities every single month.
- **Meals Missed Often:** Two in three neighbors cut the size of meals or skipped meals in the last 12 months because there wasn't enough money for food.

Neighbor Voices

"What do Travis County neighbors need most? "Having healthy food choices available to you [...] at times where you can get to them, and at a price you can afford." – Travis County Stakeholder

"I've always lived paycheck to paycheck. It's just been me and four kids... But after COVID, it's more on my brain. Before...a next-door neighbor would [say] 'Oh we have extra [food]' or something – it'd always seem to work out. Now it's like, everybody's in that pinch." – Waco Neighbor

"I've been a single mom [since] 2004. I didn't have a lot of money to work with because I had all these bills [to] pay, and I Had to make sure I was covering them...[School meals] were a godsend to help my kids get lunch every day." – Hays Neighbor

"With seniors, a lot of them have food insecurities. They choose between medicine and food — especially fresh produce, which is often the last thing they buy if they have any money left." – Bastrop Partner

"We're barely making it. [We need] some help, the low-income families, [to] kind of adjust and survive in this increase, this inflation... All the food costs more now... I was raised in Cedar Park... What happened to my little town that became a city? Now you can't even get [an] apartment... Resources are missing for people with low incomes, people with disabilities, people waiting on disability, [like me]." – Williamson County Neighbor

GUIDANCE, TIPS + RESOURCES

Who We Are:

The Central Texas Food Bank (CTFB) is the leading hunger-relief nonprofit in Central Texas, working to provide immediate and equitable access to nutritious food for individuals throughout its 21-county service area. Through a combination of direct-service programs and a network of approximately 250 nonprofit community partners, CTFB supports over 610,000 food-insecure individuals annually. To learn more about its impactful work and programs, visit centraltexasfoodbank.org.

Our Vision:

All Central Texans have immediate and equitable access to nutritious food.

Our Mission:

To increase food access in Central Texas by providing nutritious food, leading hunger and poverty advocacy efforts, and transforming lives through programs, education, and innovative solutions.

Values:

Service, Integrity, Dignity, Innovation, Collaboration

Key Terms:

Hunger: Hunger is a temporary physical condition, whereas food insecurity refers to a long-term lack of consistent access to enough nutritious food due to economic or systemic challenges.

We do not use phrases like “fighting hunger” or “ending hunger.” While hunger may not be fully eliminated, we can make a measurable impact by increasing equitable access to nutritious food for all.

Food Insecurity: Food insecurity is the condition of having inadequate resources to access enough food for an active, healthy life. This term is most appropriate for academic, research, or policy audiences.

Equitable Access: Equitable access means everyone should have the opportunity to live a healthy life, no matter their income, zip code, or background.

This includes access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food, along with the conditions that support food security, like reliable transportation and well-paying jobs. Because food insecurity impacts communities differently, we work to remove barriers and tailor programs to meet the diverse needs of all Central Texans.

Advocacy Kit

The Marketing + Communications and Advocacy + Government Affairs teams at CTFB can provide an advocacy kit containing the following documents with clear, concise key messages. Email communications@centraltexasfoodbank.org for the following:

- Frequently asked questions.
- Fact sheets.
- Updates on recent progress made in our 21-county service area.
- Graphs and charts.
- Photographs and graphics.
- Contact information for spokespersons and experts available for interview.



SOCIAL NETWORK INITIATIVES + CHALLENGES: THE HUNGER ACTION MONTH CAMPAIGN

Let's get loud this September. Hunger is affecting more of our Central Texas neighbors than you might realize, and your voice can help change that. Whether you're online, at work, or out in the community, you have the power to raise awareness and inspire action.

We've made it easy to get involved. Use the resources below to speak up, share facts, and invite others to join the movement. Every post, conversation, and small act makes a difference.

- **Post hunger facts on social media:** Use our ready-to-share graphics and key stats to educate your followers and spark conversation.
- **Encourage friends and family to volunteer or donate:** A simple ask goes a long way. We provide shareable links and language to help you invite others to take action.
- **Host a Lunch + Learn:** Raise awareness at your workplace with a short presentation about hunger in Central Texas. We've created a deck you can use to get the conversation started.
- **Wear orange:** Orange is the color of hunger awareness. Rock your orange gear all month long - especially on Hunger Action Day, September 9 - and tag @ctxfoodbank to show your support.
- **Engage with CTFB online:** Follow us on social, like and engage with our posts, and help connect more people to food assistance. Every share helps spread the word.

Hunger Action Month Campaign Materials

Like



Share



Give



Advocate



HUNGER ACTION MONTH SOCIAL MEDIA CARDS AND SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Below are some visual examples of the content of the social media cards developed for the Hunger Action Month campaign.



Did you know?

Texas ranks #2
in the nation for
food insecurity.



Together, we can change that.

Visit centraltexasfoodbank.org/ham

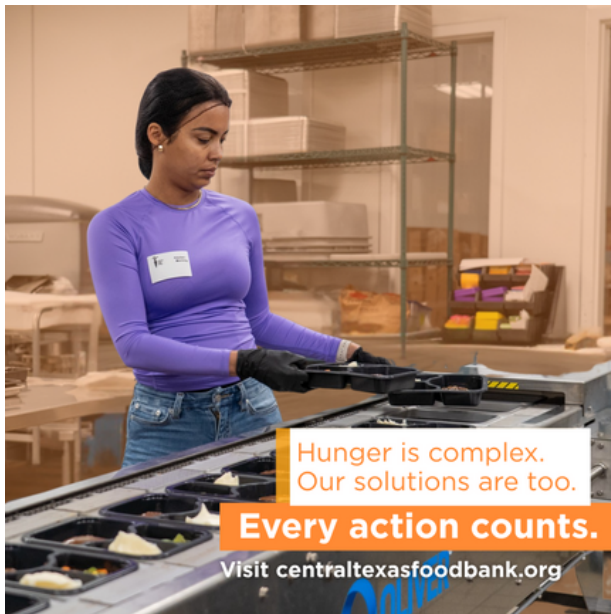
1 in 4

Children in Central
Texas are growing up in
food-insecure homes.



Together, we can change that.

Visit centraltexasfoodbank.org/ham



HUNGER ACTION MONTH SOCIAL MEDIA CARDS, INSTAGRAM CAROUSELS, X POSTS + FACEBOOK POSTS

**610,000
Central Texans**

don't have consistent
access to food.

**Hunger touches
every community.**



Together, we can change that.

Visit centraltexasfoodbank.org/ham

Two out of three

neighbors experiencing
hunger skipped meals
last year because they
couldn't afford enough
food. **That's not okay.**



Together, we can change that.

Visit centraltexasfoodbank.org/ham

**Half of all food-
insecure households**

in Central Texas include
someone living with a
chronic illness.



**Nutrition isn't optional —
it's essential.**

Visit centraltexasfoodbank.org/ham



When you give, volunteer,
or advocate, you help
make tomorrow possible.

Every action counts.

Visit centraltexasfoodbank.org



Access to nutritious
food builds stronger,
more resilient **futures.**

Food is medicine.

Visit centraltexasfoodbank.org



Our work **multiplies**
when we work together.

610,000 neighbors fed.

Visit centraltexasfoodbank.org

Social Media Post Captions

Nourish	Lead	Strengthen
<p>Hunger doesn't look the same in every community, but the need for reliable access to nutritious food is universal. From rural food deserts to urban neighborhoods with limited options, we're committed to meeting people where they are and nourishing them with dignity.</p> <p>#CTFBHungerActionMonth #MakeTomorrowPossible</p>	<p>Your voice is a powerful tool. During Hunger Action Month, speak up for policies that expand access to food, support local agriculture, and reduce barriers for our most vulnerable neighbors. Together, we can change the system, not just survive it.</p> <p>#AdvocateForChange #CTFBHungerActionMonth</p>	<p>We're not just filling plates, we're investing in long-term solutions that strengthen the food system and disrupt the cycle of hunger. From farm to table, every step matters.</p> <p>#CTFBHungerActionMonth #SustainableSolutions</p>
<p>Access to nutritious food isn't a privilege, it's a human right. Our neighbors deserve more than calories. They deserve food that supports health, honors culture, and is available when and where they need it.</p> <p>#FoodIsHealth #CTFBHungerActionMonth</p>	<p>Whether you volunteer, donate, or call your elected official, you're making an impact. Hunger is big, but so is our collective power.</p> <p>#CTFBHungerActionMonth #MakeTomorrowPossible</p>	<p>A stronger local food system means healthier communities, more resilient families, and a future where no Central Texan goes without. We're building that future every day, and we need you with us.</p> <p>#MakeTomorrowPossible #CTFBHungerActionMonth</p>

