

Kansas Appleseed ✧

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO ANTI-HUNGER ADVOCACY



Welcome to the world of anti-hunger advocacy!

Ending hunger in Kansas is a big topic that can be overwhelming to tackle, but don't worry—you're in the right place.

Because hunger is a widespread and systemic issue, there is so much to know about the roadblocks that can restrict access to food and the opportunities to break down barriers to increase food access in our state. Our hope is that our Beginner's Guide to Anti-Hunger Advocacy will help you feel confident in your ability to tackle any aspect of anti-hunger work in Kansas.

Why it matters



39% of Kansas households struggle to afford basic needs



Only 21% of those households receive food assistance due to systemic barriers and qualifications

1 in 10 Kansans are food insecure



Black, American Indian and Latino/Hispanic households are more likely to experience food insecurity in Kansas

1 in 7 Kansas kids are food insecure



49% of Kansas children receive assistance from the free & reduced meal program



It is no joke—fighting hunger can quickly turn into a word salad with the number of important programs with acronyms. Here are some definitions and information about key programs that can be helpful to you as you work to end hunger in your own community!

Definitions

- Food Insecurity: occurs when a person doesn't have enough to eat and doesn't know where their next meal will come from.
- Hunger: The physical sensation of discomfort or weakness caused by a lack of food.
- Poverty Line: The estimated minimum level of income needed to secure a comfortable standard of living.
- Living Wage: A wage high enough to maintain a usual standard of living.
- Food Apartheid: Urban or rural areas where buying affordable or good-quality fresh food is difficult.
- Social Determinants of Health (SDOH): Conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.
- Policy Advocacy: Influencing decision-makers to affect the outcomes of various types of policies. This can be done at any level where decisions are made: State, Federal, Local, even within organizations or businesses.



Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

- Formerly known as food stamps, SNAP is a federal food assistance program administered by states that provide financial assistance to eligible individuals and families to purchase food.
 - While this is a federal program, if you'd like to advocate for expanded access to SNAP, you will talk to your state legislators, as Kansas has laws restricting access to the program.
 - To learn more and/or apply for SNAP, visit [here](#).

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

- WIC is a federal assistance program that provides nutrition education, healthy food, and support to pregnant women, new mothers, and young children at nutritional risk.
 - While Congress establishes and funds WIC, local agencies administer the program.
 - You can find your local WIC agency [here](#).
 - To learn more and/or apply for WIC, go [here](#).

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

- SFSP provides free breakfast and/or lunch to kids ages 1-18 at approved sites such as schools, community centers, parks, and other locations where children typically gather during the summer. SFSP aims to fill the nutrition gap that can occur when school meal programs are unavailable.
 - To advocate for your community's having a Summer Food Service Program site or other summer meal options, you can go [here](#) to contact the Kansas State Department of Education about eligibility and availability.
 - Locate a site near you by going [here](#).





Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

- CEP is a federal program designed to streamline the process of providing free meals to students in low-income areas. Under CEP, schools and school districts with high percentages of low-income students can offer free breakfast and lunch to all enrolled students, regardless of individual household income.
 - Your school district's food service director is an important resource in CEP implementation. They can provide information on eligibility and reimbursement requirements and discuss the program's feasibility for your school or district.
 - Your local district's school board is responsible for creating policies that govern the district, so it plays an important role in determining whether a school district participates in CEP.

Summer EBT (S-EBT or SUN Bucks)

- S-EBT is a federal program that provides summer food assistance benefits to families whose children receive free or reduced-price meals during the school year.
 - Though a federal program, advocating for S-EBT is done at the state level.
 - The Department of Children and Families administers and implements the program in the state.
 - State Legislators can write laws restricting S-EBT or prohibiting the state from opting into the program.





What advocacy can look like

Kansas Appleseed's approach to advocacy combines grassroots organizing with policy research and litigation. This mix of strategies helps us tackle hunger from different angles.

Our ultimate goal is to end food insecurity and poverty in Kansas, creating lasting changes that ensure every Kansan has what they need. While this is an ambitious task, we know that political will can make it a reality for our state.

Unfortunately, Kansas lawmakers have made it harder for people to access the programs they need to put food on the table through red tape, onerous requirements, and harmful half-truths about Kansans who are just trying to get by.

Moreover, many Kansans do not even know about the resources available to them if they need to access food. This, coupled with legislative attacks on these same programs, means that the charitable sector and non-profit organizations can not advocate for a brighter future on our own.

That's where you come in.

It is often said that advocacy is not a spectator sport, and we couldn't agree more.

Getting involved in anti-hunger advocacy can make a significant difference in the lives of Kansans who are experiencing poverty and food insecurity.



Getting Connected

Building relationships with other advocates, leaders, and people who may be facing food insecurity allows us to work together more effectively and make our voices heard louder.

At Kansas Appleseed, we have created a group of over 2,500 Kansans who often come together to learn from each other and take action when necessary. You can get involved with this amazing group of advocates across the state by going to our [website](#) and signing up!

By being a member of the Hunger Action Team, you will receive an insider scoop on fighting hunger in Kansas, be some of the first to know when immediate action is needed, and work together to ensure all Kansans have what they need to thrive.



Connecting with your Community

Whether participating in events or chatting with local leaders, being active in your community is another key to fighting hunger. We recommend learning about local initiatives and organizations working to tackle hunger. Food banks, food pantries, schools, churches, and even libraries are our communities' first line of defense against hunger.

Our friends at Kansas Food Bank created an interactive website that shows every food pantry in Kansas by county. You can find that [here](#).



Staying Informed

Because of the nature of critical government programs like SNAP Food Assistance or Child Nutrition Programs, anti-hunger advocacy is a constantly evolving, ever-changing landscape that can change by the second. Staying informed allows advocates to know the latest information and stay current on potential legislation, program changes, or other news.

Kansas Appleseed has several ways to help you stay up to speed on fighting hunger in Kansas.

- **Website:** Visit Kansas Appleseed's [website](#) regularly for news and updates and access to research and reports as they are published.
- **Social Media:** Follow Kansas Appleseed on social media platforms such as [Facebook](#), [X](#) (formerly Twitter), and [Instagram](#) for real-time updates and engagement.
- **Newsletters:** [Subscribe](#) to our email newsletter to receive regular updates in your inbox.

Engaging with Policy Makers

Policymakers at every level of government make daily decisions that impact everyone, from local school boards to the White House. For many of these institutions to be effective, outside input and ideas are imperative to their operations.

Engaging with policymakers can be daunting, but you can advocate effectively for your community with a few easy tips!



Getting Started

1. Understand the issue

Before meeting with policymakers, ensure you know the issue you wish to discuss, the implications of hunger in your community, statistics, and any gaps in policy.

2. Know your audience

Policymakers' opinions and knowledge on this issue vary greatly. Before engaging with policymakers, try to get a sense of where they may lie on the issue and research their voting records as it relates to the issue. Additionally, it is helpful to see the policymaker's key priorities or if you have anything in common with them to help make a personal connection.

For example, if you see a diploma from Kansas State University on their wall, and you are a big K-State football fan, you can connect with them about a mutual interest in the university.

3. Create a compelling ask

When meeting with policymakers, it is important to have a captivating ask for them to accomplish your goals. Tailoring your message to each individual is a good first step to ensure you have their attention. From here, you will want to follow with discussing the problem you wish to speak to them about and a solution to that problem. From there, you can make a specific request for them, such as supporting a bill.

4. Make the Ask

Engaging with policymakers can happen in many different ways. Some of the most common are scheduling office visits, attending town halls or community meetings, lobby days, or Capitol visits. Check out our [Legislative Toolkit](#) to learn more about all of the tools at your disposal to engage with policymakers.



Conclusion



In the end, fighting hunger in Kansas is all about understanding the needs and barriers to food security in your community and working together to ensure no one goes hungry. While ending hunger often feels like a daunting task, little by little and inch by inch, we can all ensure a better future for Kansans - together.

However you want to fight hunger, the best way is just to get started.

See you out there.



Website Resources

SNAP:

- <https://cssp.kees.ks.gov/apsspssp/sspNonMed.portal>

WIC Agencies:

- <https://www.kdhe.ks.gov/BusinessDirectoryII.aspx?lngBusinessCategoryID=42>

WIC:

- <https://www.kdhe.ks.gov/1000/Nutrition-WIC-Services>

SFSP:

- <https://cnw.ksde.org/sfsp/>

SFSP Site Locator:

- <https://ksde.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=c59a8dfe7b5046aa893d32296c946f53>

Food Pantry Locator:

- www.kansasfoodsource.org

Child Nutrition and Wellness:

- <https://cnw.ksde.org/>

Kansas Appleseed Links

Website:

- <https://www.kansasappleseed.org/>

Newsletter:

- <http://www.kansasappleseed.org/join-kansas-appleseed/>

Facebook:

- @KansasAppleseed

X (formerly Twitter):

- @KansasApple

Instagram:

- @KansasAppleseed

Contact Us

Paige Olson, Civic Engagement Manager
polson@kansasappleseed.org