

UTAH FOOD SECURITY COUNCIL™



Established in 2022 by Senate Bill 133, the Utah Food Security Council provides recommendations at a policy level to make sure more Utah families, especially those with children, have access to food. The council seeks to coordinate statewide efforts in addressing food security by developing goals and messaging for nutrition education, ensuring consistency in federally funded programs, promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles, advancing Utah food products, and disseminating messaging to state agencies.

HIGHLIGHTS

2

New collaborative grant applications

8

Public presentations on council work and successes

33

Multi-sector community partnerships

5

Success stories

1

Toolkit created

7

Active sub-committees

13

Media appearances

3

Press releases

21

Shared work presentations

The Utah Food Security Council launched their comprehensive website

to enhance accessibility and outreach.

This marked a significant milestone in their mission to address food insecurity.

This new online platform serves as a central hub for community resources, providing valuable information to those looking to contribute to the cause and to those in need.



MEMBERSHIP

15

Council Members

98

Active Community Members



COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEGISLATORS

- **Strengthen Nutrition Program Access:** Council recommend expanding outreach and enrollment support for SNAP, WIC, and Summer EBT, ensuring rural, immigrant, and refugee families can participate fully.
- **Invest in Food Pantry Infrastructure and Operations:** We recommend increased state legislative appropriations to strengthen food pantry infrastructure, including refrigeration, freezer capacity, shelving, and related equipment. Expanding this capacity will allow pantries to maximize the use of rescued retail foods, reduce food waste, and better meet community needs with safe, fresh, and nutritious options.
- **Expand and Sustain Nutrition Incentive Programs:** We recommend expanding and sustaining nutrition incentive programs such as Utah Double Up Food Bucks, Utah Produce Rx, and the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program. These initiatives enable SNAP and other food insecure participants to stretch their food dollars, increase access to fresh, local foods, and support the livelihood of Utah farmers. Sustained investment in these programs will strengthen local food systems, promote healthier diets, and reduce food insecurity.
- **Promote Access to Familiar and Healthful Foods:** We recommend policies and investments that increase the ability of food pantries and community food providers to offer familiar, healthful, and medically appropriate foods. This approach ensures Utahns can access foods they are more likely to know how to use and prepare, while supporting individual health needs. State investment in building provider capacity, rather than mandating or incentivizing choices, will strengthen overall access and improve community health outcomes.
- **Close Rural and Workforce Gaps on Food Security:** Support mobile food pantries, transportation solutions, and workforce development for food pantry staff, volunteers, and nutrition educators.
- **Advance Health Integration and Data-Driven Policy:** Integrate food security into healthcare initiatives and fund statewide data collection to guide responsive, evidence-based policy.

COUNCIL'S NEXT STEPS

- **Strengthening a Common Measurement System** to track and evaluate the collective impact of the council's initiatives, allowing for better coordination and progress tracking.
- **Seeking External Funding** for collaborative projects aimed at addressing food security challenges across the state.
- **Strengthening Existing Partnerships** while actively building new ones to broaden the council's reach and influence.
- **Sharing Successful Programs and Knowledge**, both within Utah and beyond, to drive innovation and strengthen food security efforts across regions.
- **Enhancing Collaboration** by integrating information about local coalitions and policy councils into our website, and developing more structured pathways for partnership and joint initiatives.



POWER OF COLLECTIVE EFFORT

Disclaimer on Data Limitations: The data presented in this report does not capture food assistance provided by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Welfare System, which represents a significant contribution to meeting food needs in Utah. As a result, the figures reported here underrepresent the total level of need for assistance, as well as the amount of assistance provided in the state. Additionally, the numbers in this report are expected to increase over time as data collection systems improve. This increase may reflect both growing need and enhanced reporting capacity. Importantly, this report reflects only the data currently available; the actual level of community need is higher due to unreported assistance, local sourcing outside of the Utah Food Bank network, and unmet needs not captured in existing datasets.

Common Measurement Survey

July 1 – June 30 (Utah Partners)



2,052,102

Number of clients received services in past 1 year



72,345,990 lbs

Amount of food distributed in past 1 year
56,944,927 lbs were nutrient-dense foods



\$3,815,034

Dollar amount spent on food purchase to distribute



\$44,675,316

Funding in last 1 year



29

Number of grants applied



Important Context:

The true need is vastly underreported
Data does not include private partners

Key Highlights from Organizational Partners

Food Waste Reduction & Prevention

- Grocery rescue, gleaning, and farm partnerships keep good food from going to landfills.
- Nutrition programs (EFNEP, Create Better Health) teach meal planning, storage, and composting.
- Partnerships with groups like WasteLess Solutions expand food recovery statewide.

Culturally Appropriate Food Access

- Halal-certified foods, African/Asian vegetables, and gluten-free options provided.
- Refugee-led markets & gardening programs supply familiar foods.
- Special initiatives (e.g., Ramadan food boxes) meet cultural needs with dignity.

Food Security Success Stories

- 72M lbs of food distributed – Utah Food Bank's largest year ever.
- 43,000+ families served through WIC, with individualized counseling & breastfeeding support.
- Community innovation: Refugees, students, and people with lived experience shape food security research and solutions.
- Empowerment: Gardening and markets build skills, income, and self-reliance.

Why This Matters

This collective data shows the scale of hunger relief efforts in Utah and the power of coordinated reporting. With just 14 partners reporting, we can already demonstrate enormous reach—data that strengthens funding requests, policy advocacy, and strategic partnerships to better serve Utah families.

Key Takeaways

Utah's food security work goes beyond food distribution. It:

- ✓ Reduces waste
- ✓ Respects culture & dignity
- ✓ Supports health & nutrition
- ✓ Builds workforce & community resilience

Together, these efforts strengthen families and communities across Utah



SUCCESS STORY

Food insecurity is growing in Davis County, despite its reputation for affluence. The Davis County Food Environment Work Group (FEWG) is tackling this challenge by uniting organizations to improve access to healthy, affordable, and culturally relevant food.

A recent presentation to the Utah Food Security Council proved transformative. By sharing their work, FEWG gained visibility, forged new state-level partnerships, and received connections that expanded their reach.

Now, with new voices at the table, FEWG is better equipped to support food security countywide. The FSC's support has shown how strategic collaboration can turn local efforts into statewide impact.



The Food Security Council is not just a meeting space- it's a catalyst for stronger, more connected food security systems across Utah.

SUBCOMMITTEES

Communications

The Communications sub-committee launched awareness campaigns and facilitated community outreach, spreading vital information about food assistance programs and encouraging community involvement. Their work has significantly increased public awareness and engagement in food security efforts.

Food Recovery

The Food Recovery sub-committee is a dedicated team working to reduce food waste and redirect surplus food to those in need. Their initiatives not only help alleviate hunger but also promote sustainability and environmental stewardship.

Homelessness

The Homelessness sub-committee is researching the unique challenges faced by those without stable housing. Partnering with service providers, they will develop strategies to ensure access to nutritious food for this at-risk group.

Mapping

The Mapping sub-committee is developing comprehensive maps to identify resources available for Utah's vulnerable populations. This invaluable data will allow the council to allocate resources more effectively and reach areas with the most need.

Policy

The Policy sub-committee has advocated for legislation that supports food security initiatives, ensuring sustainable funding and resources. Their efforts impacted several policy changes that provided greater support for food-insecure families in Utah.

Local Food Promotion

The Local Food sub-committee is working on innovative approaches to highlight and promote Utah's local foods. Their initiatives included educating consumers about local food options and developing partnerships to increase their use across the state.

Evaluation

The Evaluation sub-committee tracks the impact of the council's initiatives, providing critical feedback and data to refine and improve strategies. Their efforts ensure that every initiative is documented and can be shared with Utah legislative leadership for informed decision-making.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

59,025

Social Media Reach

3

Press Releases

9,886

Website Visits

13

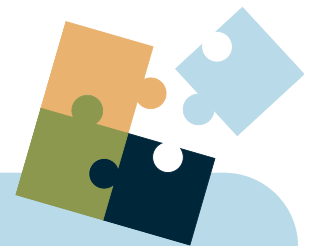
Media Interviews

1

Journal Publication



COUNCIL MEMBERS



Council is composed of fifteen members as defined in State Bill 0133:

1. The executive director of Department of Health and Human Services or designee
Natalie Loots, Department of Health and Human Services
2. The executive director of the Department of Workforce Services or designee
Frank Vega, Department of Workforce Services
3. The state superintendent or designee
Kimberly Loveland, Utah State Board of Education
4. The commissioner or designee
Cassidy Dragnat, Utah System of Higher Education
5. The commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Food or designee
Craig Buttars, Representative Natalie McHale, Department of Agriculture
6. Member who represents USU Extension
Justen Smith, Representative Ashley Butler, Utah State University Extension
7. Member who represents Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program
Paula Scott, Representative Heidi LeBlanc, Utah State University Extension
8. Member who represents the Utah Women, Infants, and Children Program
Rachel Bowman, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
9. Member who represents the Utah SNAP-Ed program
Lea Palmer, Create Better Health (Utah SNAP-Ed)
10. Member who represents a food assistance organization
Nisay Lao, Granger Community Christian Church
11. Member who represents an advocacy group that addresses federal nutrition program
Gina Cornia, *Chair of Council*, Utahns Against Hunger
12. Member who represents an organization that promotes healthy eating and active lifestyles in the state
Kamaile Tripp-Harris, University of Utah School of Medicine, Community Health Workers Program
13. Member who represents an organization that provides refugee resettlement services in the state
Sierra Govett, International Rescue Committee
14. One member who represents the Utah Farm Bureau Federation
Spencer Gibbons, Representative Aubree Thomas, Utah Farm Bureau
15. One member who represents a tribal government in the state
James Toledo, Utah Division of Indian Affairs

Community Partners in 2025

USU Nutrition, Dietetics & Food Sciences | Get Healthy Utah | Utah Department of Transportation | Utah Commodity Supplemental Food Program | American Heart Association of Idaho and Utah | United Way of Northern Utah | Wasteless Solutions | Green Urban Lunch Box | Utah Agriculture in the Classroom | University of Utah | American Academy of Pediatrics Utah | Intermountain Healthcare | Brigham Young University | Bear River Health Department | Summit County Health Department | USU Center for Anticipatory Intelligence | Salt Lake County Health Department | USU Student Nutrition Access Center | USU College of Agriculture & Applied Sciences | Utah County Health Department | USU Applied Sciences, Technology & Education | Utah Valley University | Unite Us | Salt Lake Community College | Midvale Community Building Community | Salt Lake County Sustainability Department | Comunidades Unidas | Davis County | Utah Farm to Fork | Department of Workforce Services Homeless Services | U of U Basic Needs Collective | USU Center of Community Engagement | U of U Center for Community Nutrition | Department of Veterans Affairs | FourPoints Health | Community Action Services | Utah Food Bank | Weber State University | Salt Lake County Aging and Adult Services | Tabitha's Way | Bountiful Food Pantry | Kroger Corporate

