

Nevada Council on Food Security

2022 Annual Report

January 1, 2022-December 31, 2022



**Nevada Department of
Health and Human Services**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the past eight (8) years, the Governor’s Council on Food Security (CFS) aimed to fight hunger among Nevadan’s who are at increased and/or higher risk of food insecurity, including children and older Nevadans. Since the inception of the 2014 Governors Executive Order creating the Council and Food Security and codifying the CFS into state law in the 80th Legislative Session in 2019, there has been many accomplishments over the years with continued progress in 2022. The CFS recognizes the need for systemic collaboration between all partners to adequately reduce hunger and improve a person’s overall well-being. The CFS is tasked with reviewing legislation and protocols at the federal, state, and local level for feedback that affects the food policy infrastructure.

The CFS meetings are held quarterly, which helps partners remain aware of various funding streams and assists with improving the quality of service and meals to Nevadans through education, recommendations, and feedback. Ongoing meetings also help ensure partners remain aware of emergency response plans and streamline food access to provide excellent services to Nevadans. The 2022 Needs Assessment estimated that by 2025, almost 100,000 older Nevadans will need supplemental nutrition and/or emergency food services. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, in Fiscal Year 2021, 453,300 Nevada residents received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits with most of the participants being families with children (281,046). Participants continue to steadily increase over the years with a concern for the senior population since the rural and small towns fall behind the national average.¹

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) stunted Nevada’s progress in addressing hunger and completely changed the landscape of food insecurity in Nevada. At the height of the pandemic, food security partners statewide saw an unprecedented increase in the need for food and nutrition services, due to high unemployment rates, limited access to resources, and social distancing guidelines. Since the end of the Great Recession, Nevada has made significant strides in addressing food insecurity. Nevada has demonstrated its dedication to providing a platform for enhancing collaborative efforts throughout the food security network and implementing policies supporting food security statewide. The CFS has continued to carry this mission throughout 2022 and looks forward to continuing their efforts in 2023. These ongoing efforts continue to bring many partners together to reshape food security in Nevada and help Nevada residents living in food-insecure households.

¹ Nevada Food Security Strategic Plan Draft V2 8-29-22

INTRODUCTION

Per the NRS 232.4968, The CFS is to create a report to “...review the accomplishments and recommendations of the Council concerning food security, including, without limitation, any recommendations concerning community gardens and urban farms.” This report is called the CFS Annual Report, which is submitted to the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau annually by January. The CFS 2022 Annual Report is written in collaboration Nevada’s Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office of Food Security (OFS) who provides administrative support and technical assistance as requested. The CFS 2022 Annual Report covers Jan 1, 2022-Dec 31, 2022, time period.

The CFS collaborates with many partners from various public, private, and community organizations. All whom come together to collaborate and support statewide food security efforts. Partnerships are pivotal in ensuring food insecurities are adequately assessed on an ongoing basis to end hunger and effectively resolve disparities in the State of Nevada. The CFS acknowledges the importance of client-centered strategies, teamwork on federal policy changes, and integrating the private sector into the food banks to assist in food abundance for Nevadans. The CFS recognizes farmers, ranchers, and manufactures as a critical part of Nevada’s Food Security and the economy that directly and indirectly impacts business such as food banks throughout the state. The Economic Analysis of Food and Agriculture Sector in Nevada’s 2021 Report states “Agriculture production uses natural resources from forest, croplands and ranches across Nevada to produce agriculture commodities.” Many of these commodities are converted into finished products by the food manufacturing industry and found in places like food banks. Many food banks and distribution centers also rely on farmers and ranchers to provide fresh fruit and vegetables.



BACKGROUND



MARCH 2012

A strategic planning process was developed through the Department of Health and Human Services' (DHHS) Grants Management UNIT (GMU) to address food insecurity in Nevada. Nevada Stakeholders met collaboratively from government and private sectors to jointly understand the root causes of hunger, the impact on those in Nevada, and how to improve the Nevadans' quality of life and health.

FEBRUARY 7, 2013

The Food Security Plan: Nevada's Plan for Action was developed.

FEBRUARY 12, 2014

Governor Brian Sandoval established Council of Food Security (CFS) with DHHS to adequately address Nevada's food insecurity and to implement the 2013 strategic plan (Executive Order 2014-03).

2017

The CFS updated the Food Security Plan, as defined in the NRS 232.4964, to ensure that activities were measurable and actionable.

2018

A Food Summit was hosted which resulted in significant input from 165 participants and representatives on food systems, food security, and healthy communities. In November, the 2013 Food Security Plan was updated with new activities, modified pillars, and expanded to older Nevadans.

APRIL 2012

The Office of Food Security (OFS) published the Community Needs Assessment, and a Food Security Steering Committee was created to oversee a strategic planning process and address policy issues.

AUGUST 2013

The First Lady of Nevada, Kathleen T. Sandoval, hosted the A Place at the Table event that engaged stakeholders in a broad community conversation about hunger issues in Nevada.

MARCH 27, 2014

The first CFS meeting occurred in Las Vegas, Nevada.

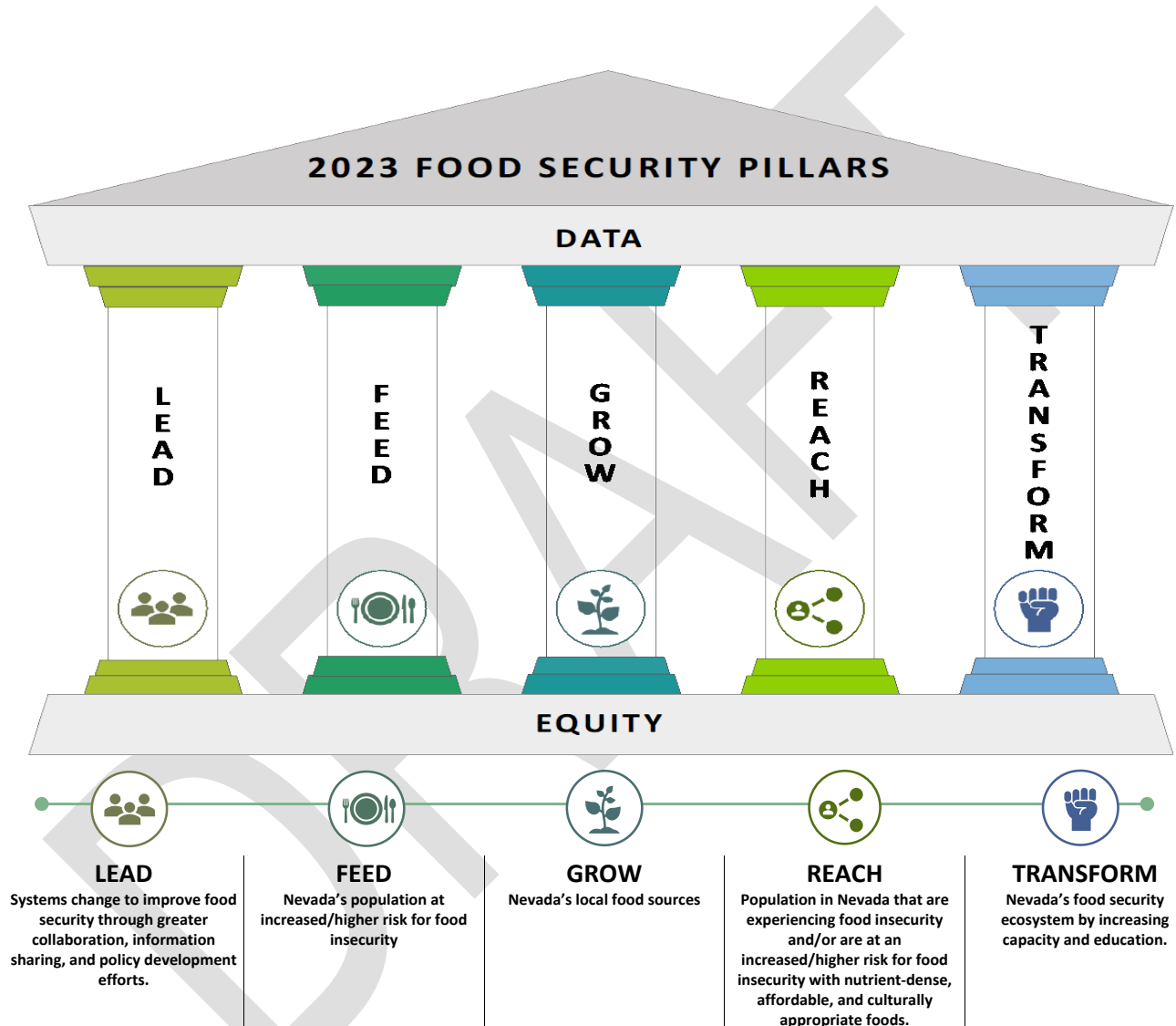
2015-2016

The council spent 2015-2016 supporting legislation, policies, and programs to ensure Nevadans' food security. CFS provided a platform for stakeholders and subject-matter experts to make recommendations to state agencies on addressing food insecurity in Nevada and has enhanced connectivity among food security initiatives and partners.

JULY 2021

The DHHS Office of Food Security (OFS) partnered with The Blueprint Collaborative, which partnered with the Guinn Center, to provide further updates to the 2013 Strategic Plan for 2023. These updates included modified goals and objectives for the established 2013 pillars (LEAD, GROW, FEED, and REACH) and a new pillar was created called TRANSFORM.

Starting in 2022, the OFS and the CFS began the process of developing an updated Nevada Food Security Strategic Plan from the 2018 Strategic Plan calling the new plan *The 2023 Nevada Food Security Strategic Plan*. The original pillars were LEAD, GROW, FEED, and REACH with REACH being eliminated in 2018 and added back along with a new pillar called TRANSFORM for 2023. This new pillar is to generate a healthier food security ecosystem by addressing the root causes of hunger. The pillars on which this strategic plan is built are as follows:



Over the past eight (8) years, the CFS members have captured the council's yearly progress. Those Annual reports can be found at [https://dpbh.nv.gov/Programs/OFS/GCFS_Meetings/OFS - Governor s Food Security Council/](https://dpbh.nv.gov/Programs/OFS/GCFS_Meetings/OFS_-_Governor_s_Food_Security_Council/).

This link also identifies the past three (3) years of the CFS meeting information and Executive order 2014-03.

FOOD INSECURITY IN NEVADA

Food Insecurity as defined by the USDA, is the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited/uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations states that a person is food insecure when “they lack regular access to enough safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life.”² Food insecurity goes beyond empty refrigerators, pantries, and needing food to survive. Food insecurity impacts an individual’s overall health, well-being, and culture and is influenced by the social, political, and economic environment one lives in. It is a significant public health concern associated with adverse health outcomes and a poor quality of life, including chronic diseases and mental health issues.^{3,4} For example, Feeding America indicates that the total excess healthcare cost associated with food security is \$518,266,000 in Nevada. The 2023 Nevada Food Security Strategic Plan (Draft) reports that 14.8 of older Nevadans were food insecure in 2017. To assuage these health and economic effects of food insecurity, the Funds for Healthy Nevada (FHN)⁵ providers are allowing for more options and availability to better meet dietary and medical needs, preferences, and restrictions. One of the 11 FHN providers, the Food Bank of Northern Nevada (FBNN), reported in 2021 aligning with local medical centers to reduce client A1C levels and reported a 66% of patients had a downward trend.

The State of Obesity 2022 report indicates “For children and adolescents, food insecurity is associated with a lower quality diet and a range of poor physical and mental health outcomes—including higher odds of having asthma, anemia, and fair or poor health and a higher risk of cognitive issues, aggression, anxiety, depression, behavior problems, suicide, ideation, and hospitalization.” Children experiencing food insecurity were also likely to repeat a grade in elementary school, experience developmental impairments in areas like language and motor skills and have more social and behavioral problems. To reduce these risks and concerns the 2021 Universal School Meals Program Act was established. This act permanently provides free breakfast, lunch, dinner, and a snack to all school children regardless of income, eliminates school meal debt, and strengthens local economies by incentivizing local food procurement.⁶ The USDA extended these free services through the 2022 school year.

² <https://www.fao.org/hunger/en/>

³ <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/84467/err-235.pdf?v=42942>

⁴ <https://academic.oup.com/jn/article/145/3/622/4743717>

⁵ The Fund for a Healthy Nevada (FHN) is governed by Chapter 439, Sections 620–630, of the Nevada Revised Statutes to utilize 60% of tobacco settlement monies received or recovered by the State of Nevada. The DHHS uses the FHN funds to support health and social services activities that align with legislatively defined priority areas to address gaps identified in various needs assessments across the State of Nevada to promote public health and improve health services for children, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities.

⁶ [H.R.3115 - 117th Congress \(2021-2022\): Universal School Meals Program Act of 2021 | Congress.gov | Library of Congress](https://www.congress.gov/117/legislation/house-bills/3115)

The older adult population faces more unique food security challenges with an increased risk of hunger due to poor health conditions, homebound needs, low fixed incomes, and limitations that impact their ability to obtain or prepare food. Having low income forces some seniors to purchase inexpensive and less nutritious foods to financially secure their housing, utilities, and prescriptions. According to the 2023 Nevada Food Security Strategic Plan (Draft), there were about 80,000 Nevadans aged 60 years and older who identified as food insecure. Data projections suggest that Nevada will witness a 36 % increase in the older adult population over the next ten years. Thus, it is estimated that by 2025, almost 100,000 older Nevadans will need nutrition/emergency food services. Illustrating the degree of food insecurity, many Nevadans participate in federal supplemental nutrition programs.⁷

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, in Fiscal Year 2021, 453,300 Nevada residents, or 14 % of the state population (1 in 7), received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funds. Of the SNAP participants, almost 62 % are families with children. In addition, more than 30 % are families with members who are older adults or have disabilities. Furthermore, 44 % of SNAP recipients are in working families. In recent years, Nevada has successfully increased the number of eligible individuals participating in SNAP. In 2018, 92 % of eligible individuals participated in SNAP, up from 61 % in 2009. However, the senior SNAP participation in Nevada's rural and small towns is lower than the national average.⁶

The Supplementation Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) has encouraged more agencies to apply for the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) funding. In February 2021, the Healthy Communities Coalition (HCC) acquired a new building to broaden its infrastructure to produce food for local food pantries and farmers' markets. In addition, HCC received a \$100,000 GusNIP grant to launch a double-up food bucks pilot program to encourage fruit and vegetable purchases using SNAP benefits at select local convenient stores, which efforts have continued throughout 2022.

The USDA recognizes two primary funding sources to tackle food insecurity, which are public and private funds. The public funds are obtained through federal, state, and local agencies, as well as governmental units. Private funds are identified through charitable foundations, direct giving programs, voluntary agencies, and other community groups. This is accurate for the State of Nevada, which continues to strive toward expanding programs to reduce and eliminate food insecurity amongst

⁷ Nevada Food Security Strategic Plan Draft V2 8-29-22

Nevadans. A couple of programs aforementioned are SNAP-Ed, GusNIP, and the 2021 Universal School Meals Program. Below are additional funding highlights brought to the attention of CFS during 2022, but are not inclusive:

- Nevada Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program received a grant to improve WIC ordering and intends to conduct an online ordering WIC exploratory project data.
- Beginning in the 2022 school year, the Farm to School Grant Program through NDA supported 123 grants, serving 5,000 schools and more than 3.2 million students.⁸
- The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) remains established to improve the health of low-income elderly persons at least 60 years of age by supplementing their diets with nutritious USDA Foods. The NDA continues to progress in improving partners' relations to promote the CSFP allowing distributions to seniors in their area and working towards increasing participation in the program, distributing premade meals, and improving access to the program. In 2021, the NDA reported that the CSFP provided more than 14,000 pounds of Nevada-grown, fresh produce and provided coupons for fresh produce.
- The CFS reports the Rural Food Hub Grant, a \$3 million grant, will address food insecurities for rural communities and tribal entities that was released at the end of August 2022.

Impact of COVID-19 on Nevada's Food Security

To assess the impact of COVID-19 on food insecurity in Nevada and track the incredible response efforts of Nevada's food security network, the OFS collaborated with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Foundation to develop a food security report series. There are two (2) reports included within the series:

- [Combatting the Statewide Hunger Crisis](#)
- [Hunger Among Older Nevadans Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

The reports comprehensively summarized COVID-19 response efforts and service data from select food security partners. In addition, the reports summarized all waivers and rule flexibilities implemented for federal nutrition programs and included data and information on federal nutrition programs and food bank distributions. The series of reports can be found on the OFS website. Report findings will be used to assess statewide food insecurity response efforts to identify best practices and service opportunity gaps and inform future initiatives and priorities.

⁸ <https://www.fns.usda.gov/f2s/farm-school-grant-program>

In September 2022, the President of the United States declared an end to COVID-19. Per the CFS, the pandemic had long lasting effects and caused some Nevadans to experience food insecurity for the first time. The pandemic exposed a lack of infrastructure and partnerships across the food system, in addition to the need to increase cold storage, which became problematic for the food industry. Currently, in 2022, remote and rural communities still have needs, especially with some stores permanently shutting down during COVID-19.

At the height of the pandemic, food security partners statewide saw an unprecedented increase in the need for food and nutrition services due to high unemployment rates, limited access to resources, and social distancing guidelines. The Casinos in Nevada employ many Nevadans and is a significant revenue source for several businesses in the state that were significantly impacted by the pandemic. In 2018, it was reported 409,444 people were employed by Nevada Casinos.⁹ In January 2022, the Nevada Gaming Control Board's Annual Nevada Gaming Abstract reported that 302 casinos lost \$206.4 million over 12 months at the end of June 2021 with a decrease in the number of employees. The hospitality industry faced similar barriers. Despite the setbacks, the Nevada food security partners have continued food rescue efforts and initiatives.

Food security partners have worked tirelessly to meet the needs of Nevadans by constantly adjusting to programs, navigating new challenges and federal guidance, implementing new procedures, and embarking on new partnerships. Despite these collective efforts, Feeding America data showed Nevada being ranked eighth nationally among states with the highest projected overall food insecurity rates in 2021 at 15.2%, compared to 2020 projections (17.1%) and 2019 actuals (12.1%), with an overall projected 24.8% increase between 2019 and 2021. Similarly, Nevada was ranked eighth nationally among states with the highest projected very low food insecurity rates in 2021 (6.2%) compared to 2020 projections (7.2%) and 2019 actuals (4.8%), with an overall projected 29.2% increase between 2019 and 2021. The same report ranked Nevada as fifth nationally among states with the highest projected child food insecurity rates in 2021 (23%) compared to 2020 (26.7%) projections and 2019 actuals (17.7%), with an overall projected 30% increase between 2019 and 2021. Nevada was ranked second nationally among states with the highest projected rates of children in very low food insecurity rates in 2021 (8.1%) compared to 2020 (9.3%) projections and 2019 (6.3%) actuals, with an overall projected increase of 28.6% between 2019 and 2021.

⁹ [US casino employees by state 2018 | Statista](#)

To support and mitigate the impacts of COVID, the federal government provided temporary funding through four federal bills. According to the Nevada Care ACT Overview, these bills covered COVID testing, contact tracing, emergency response, financial relief to businesses, families, and individuals, health care, and state and local governments, including K-12 schools and higher education institutions. These bills were called the

- Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act (HR 6074)
- Families First Coronavirus Response Act (HR 6201)
- Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act (HR 266)
- Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (HR 748)

An estimated one billion was distributed directly to entities within Nevada, including health care and community health providers and the state and local programs. Review https://gov.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/govnewnv.gov/Content/News/Press/2020_attachments/Nevada_CAR ES_Act_Overview.pdf to further understand where these funds were distributed and the total funding allocations. Additional funds were accessed through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) for initiatives and/or capacity building to enhance local food security. The Nevada Community Food Access Grant, funded through the American Rescue Plan Act – Coronavirus State and Local Recovery Funds (ARPA-SLFRF), supported food access by enhancing small-scale food distribution infrastructure and purchasing food. On April 1, 2022, the NDA released the Nevada Community Food Access (NCFA) grant to increase food access in underserved communities throughout Nevada with an emphasis on food distribution infrastructure enhancement and the provision of food to households in need. Through this grant, the NDA awarded \$500,000 to six partners. The NDA is now expanding the scope of this grant by releasing the second round of grant funding totaling to \$6,000,000 to mainly focus on food distribution and food storage infrastructure enhancement for households in rural, tribal, and underserved communities.

NEVADA CFS: 2022 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Throughout 2022, the CFS focused on refining the objectives and goals for the strategic plan and establishing the 2023 Nevada Food Security Strategic Plan. The CFS also worked in collaboration with food security partners through discussions and meetings to assist with equitable access to and education of food resources.

The CFS duties are listed in the [NRS 232.4968](#) and was presented to the CFS board members through a presentation by The DHHS Deputy Attorney General in 2021. To locate these duties and the presentation, click [here](#). The CFS met four times in 2022; January 18, April 06, July 13, and November 1.

In 2022, the CFS discussed several important food security topics in Nevada. They focused on food donation environment scans, effective communication between all food partners, remaining informed on food-related programs, including food security data, and brought awareness to food security funding in the State of Nevada. Additionally, the CFS supports young farmers who grow food for people and organizations at the intersection of food insecurity and agriculture. In **CFS meetings, discussions have explored the challenges around the Nevada Food Security ecosystem and discussed the emergency food plan in case of a natural disaster. The emergency food plan is ready to be executed when an emergency arises and can be found by the public at The plan has food, shelter, health, transportation, and energy sector elements available to the public.**

The CFS promotes discussion to create necessary food security infrastructure and program changes effectively. The CFS provides information to the food security organizations to have the necessary tools to continue providing services to Nevadans. In 2022, the CFS had the following discussions:

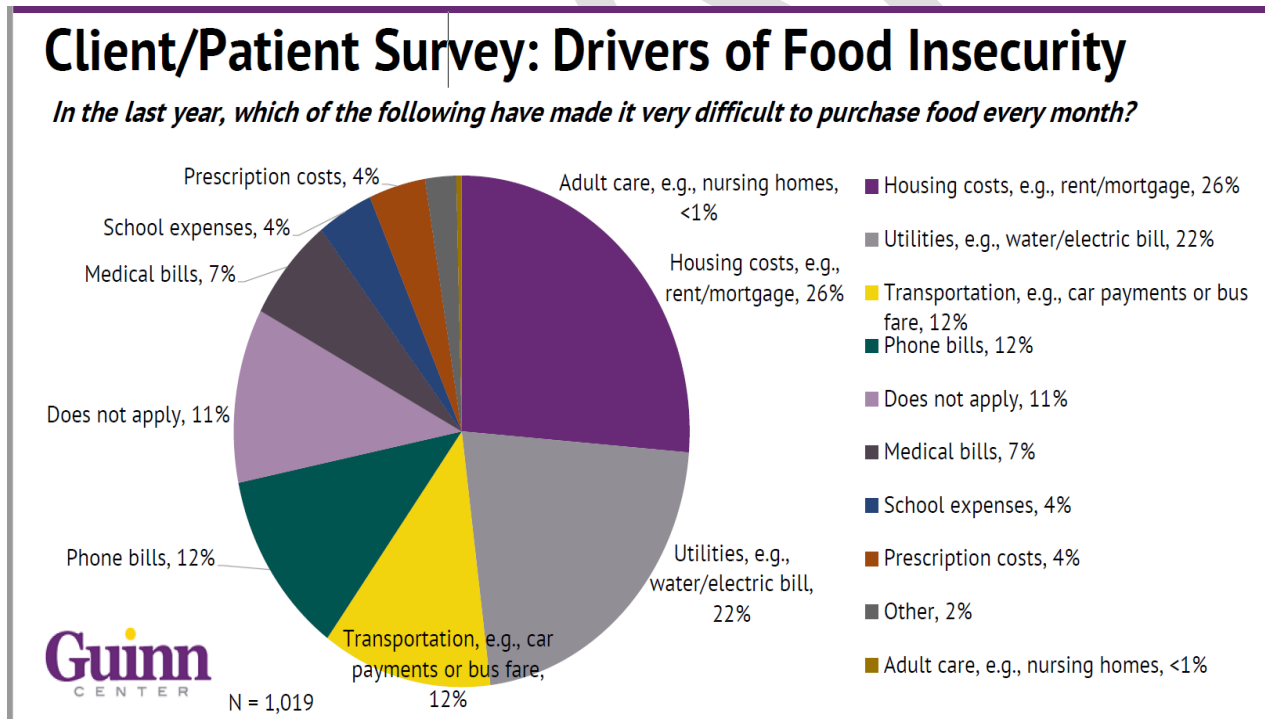
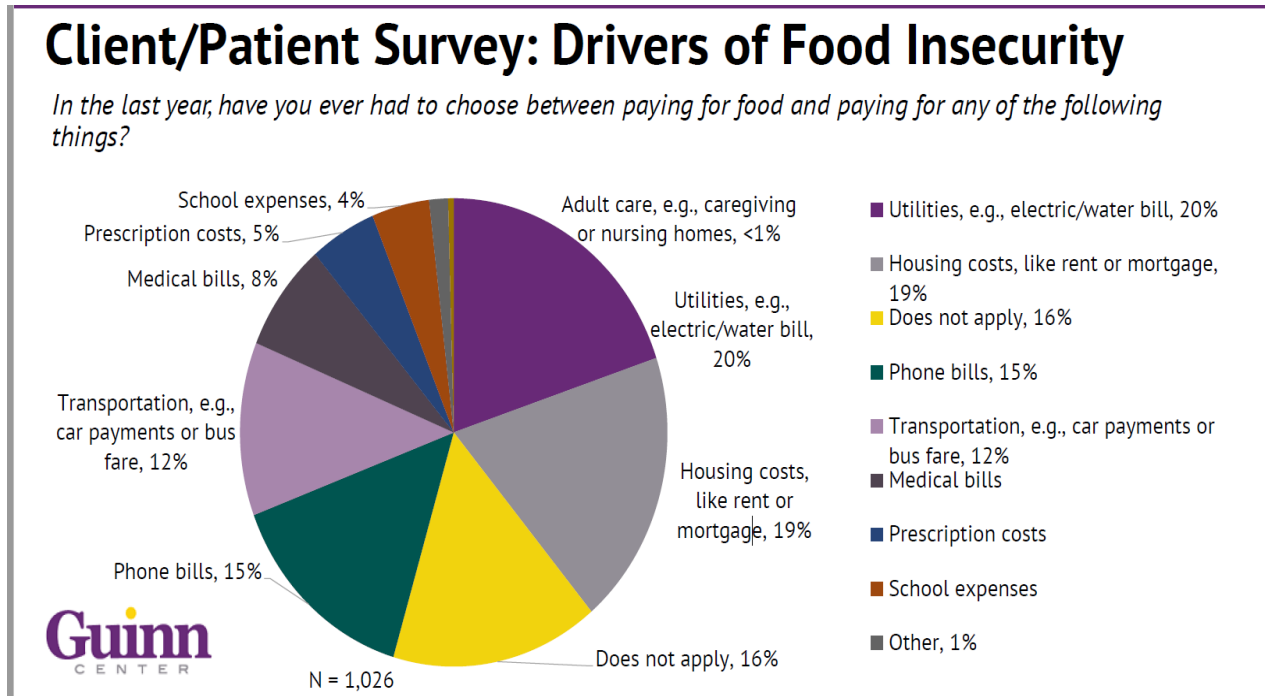
- Discussion and possible action to make recommendations for Interim Committee on Health presentation regarding food security issues and priorities
- Discussion on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Updates
 - The CFS reported a projection of 1.75 billion dollars in SNAP Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT), including Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT).
 - The CFS recommended a survey or analysis to determine if programs assisted new recipients and offered assistance in the proposal.

- Discussion and possible action to make recommendations regarding American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding
 - SB 461 set aside 7.6 million for food security work; however, there is no additional information.
- Discussion and possible action to make recommendations to Grants Management Advisory Committee (GMAC) regarding Funds for a Healthy Nevada (FHN) funding
- Update on the State Partnerships Improving Nutrition Equity (SPINE) project and SPINE Action Plan.
- Discussion and updates on the strategic planning process for 2023.


Food Security Assessments and Plans

Food Need Assessments have been completed over the years to track Nevada's Food Security and the progress towards addressing hunger in Nevada. DHHS Grants Management Unit (GMU) completed a needs assessment in 2012 that resulted in the 2013 Food Security in Nevada: Nevada's Plan for Action (i.e., the Food Security Plan). This plan was updated in 2018 and again by the OFS and Blueprint Collaborative in April 2022 with additional surveys to partners (**Figure 1**). Currently, the Food Security Strategic Plan is being updated for 2023. The one-pager presented in 2021 on the Food Security Strategic Planning Overview can be found [here](#). It is noteworthy to mention that partners also conduct their own surveys. For example, Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada (CCNN) and Three-Square Food Bank conducted an environmental scan of rural communities in Northern and Southern Nevada to assess additional existing food rescue/donation efforts and/or opportunities.

Figure 1: Drivers of Food Insecurity



FUTURE FOCUS

In 2023, the CFS will focus on the execution of *The 2023 Nevada Food Security Strategic Plan*, continue supporting food security in the State of Nevada, and holding meetings to expand knowledge and understanding around food insecurity of Nevadans 

The CFS will also participate in the legislative session for 2023.

DRAFT

MEMBERS: NEVADA COUNCIL ON FOOD SECURITY

Appointed as needed

Such other representatives of State Government as may be designated by the Governor

Aurora Buffington, Public Health Nutritionist; University of Nevada Cooperative Extension

A person who is a representative of the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension

Brittany Price, Director of Sustainable Operations; MGM Resorts International

One member who is a representative of the gaming industry, hospitality industry, or restaurant industry

Deacon Tom Roberts, President, and CEO; Catholic Charities, Southern Nevada

A person who is a representative of an organization that provides community-based services, including, without limitation, services that focus on the social determinants of health, in southern Nevada

Deborah Hassett, Designee; Deputy Director, Programs; Nevada DHHS

The Director or his or her designee from within the Department

Dorian Stonebarger, Chief Policy Advisor for City Councilman Brian Knudsen

A person who possesses knowledge, skill, and experience in the provision of services to children and families

Homa Anoooshehpour, Nevada Department of Agriculture, Division of Food and Nutrition Administrator

Director of the Nevada Department of Agriculture or designee from within the Department

Jennifer Ott, Director; Nevada Department of Agriculture

The State of Nevada Governor's Designee

Jenny Yeager, Director of Programs and Community Engagement; Food Bank of Northern Nevada

A person who is a representative of a food bank serving northern Nevada

Jesus Mendoza, Jr., Regional Administrator; United States Department of Agriculture Western Regional Office

Western Regional Director of the United States Department of Agriculture or designee from within the Department.

Jhone Ebert (Proxy: Pamela Juniel), Superintendent of Public Instruction; Nevada Department of Education

The Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Nevada Department of education or his or her designee within the Division

Kelli Kelly, Director; Fallon Food Hub

One member who is a representative of persons engaged in the business of processing or distributing food

Kenneth Osgood, MD, MPH, Director; Southern Nevada Health District Board of Health

A person who is a representative of a local health authority

Kyle Devine; Health Bureau Chief; Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health

Administrator of the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health or his or her designee from within the Division

Marcia Blake, Executive Director; Helping Hands of Vegas Valley

A person who possesses knowledge, skill, and experience in the provision of services to senior citizens and persons with disabilities

Marie Baxter, CEO; Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada

A person who is a representative of an organization that provides community-based services, including, without limitation, services that focus on the social determinants of health, in northern Nevada

Maurice Johnson, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives; Three Square Food Bank

A person who is a representative of a food bank serving southern Nevada

James Humm, Director of Public Policy and Government Affairs

Director of the Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development or his or her designee within the Office

Rebekah Stetson, CEO; Farmily

One member who is a representative of farmers or ranchers engaged in food production

Rique Robb, Designee; Deputy Administrator; Nevada Aging and Disability Services Division, Child Services

The Administrator of the Aging and Disability Services Division of the Department or his or her designee from within the Department

Kelly Cantrelle; Deputy Administrator; Nevada Division of Welfare and Supportive Services

Administrator of the Nevada Division of Welfare and Supportive Services or designee from within the Division

VACANT

One member who is a representative of retailers of food

VACANT

One member representing community-based services (Rural Nevada)

VACANT

One member who is a representative of manufacturing that is not related to food

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