



State of Nevada
Council on Food
Security

2019

Annual Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food insecurity as households that were uncertain of having, or unable to acquire, enough food to meet the needs of household members due to insufficient resources for food. Food insecurity is a significant public health concern associated with adverse health outcomes and a poor quality of life, including chronic diseases and mental health issues.^{1,2} In addition, food insecure individuals often lack access to nutrition-dense foods, limiting their ability to maintain healthy eating behaviors and manage their chronic disease(s).

According to the USDA report *Household Food Insecurity in the United States in 2018*, approximately one (1) in eight (8) Nevada households were food insecure at least one (1) time during 2018, where the food intake of one (1) or more household members was reduced and their eating patterns disrupted at times because the household lacked money or other resources for obtaining food. While food insecurity may be harmful to individuals of all ages, it can be especially devastating to children. Feeding America estimates in 2017, about one (1) in five (5) Nevada children were food insecure.³ Food insecure children are more 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.⁴

Since its inception in 2014, the Nevada Council on Food Security (CFS) has focused efforts on promoting and supporting policies addressing food insecurity and its determinants and working to increase participation in federal nutrition programs. In the 80th Nevada Legislative Session, the CFS championed several food security-related policies, all of which ultimately passed/were signed into law by Governor Steve Sisolak. Policies included codifying the CFS, increasing meal reimbursements for senior meal programs, and enhancing food rescue in Nevada through establishing a statewide food rescue program.

This report outlines the background of the CFS and 2019 accomplishments.

BACKGROUND

In 2012, a community needs assessment was conducted by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Grants Management Unit (GMU). The assessment identified food insecurity as a priority public health issue for Nevada. At the time, one (1) in six (6) Nevada households were food insecure. In 2013, an initial food security summit, “A Place at the Table,” was held which engaged statewide stakeholders in a conversation about hunger issues in Nevada. This event resulted in significant input from 165 participants and representatives on food systems, food security, and healthy communities. In 2013, the GMU also implemented a strategic planning process to address food insecurity in Nevada. Four (4) workgroups were created to address

¹ <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/84467/err-235.pdf?v=42942>

² <http://jn.nutrition.org/content/145/3/622.full>

³ https://www.feedingamerica.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/2017-map-the-meal-gap-child-food-insecurity_0.pdf

⁴ <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/child-hunger-facts>

specific components of food insecurity: LEAD, FEED, GROW, and REACH. Goals and activities were developed under each component, comprising the 2013 [*Food Security in Nevada: Nevada's Plan for Action*](#) (i.e. the Food Security Plan).

Following the completion of the Food Security Plan, Governor Brian Sandoval issued Executive Order 2014-03 on February 12, 2014, establishing the CFS to implement the goals of the Food Security Plan and effectively improve the quality of life and health of Nevadans by increasing food security throughout the State.

In 2017, the CFS worked to update and revise the [*Food Security Plan*](#) to ensure objectives and activities were measurable and actionable. The updated themes and objectives are:

LEAD

- **Goal 1:** Align and enhance collaboration efforts of state and non-state agencies to strengthen statewide food security strategies.
- **Goal 2:** Identify and support state and local policies that increase food security in Nevada.

FEED

- **Goal 1:** Support strategies that increase participation in state/federal nutrition programs.
- **Goal 2:** Support client-centered strategies that increase access to nutrition programs and resources that address determinants of hunger.

GROW

- **Goal 1:** Support initiatives to strengthen Nevada's food system and increase access to local foods.

DATA

- **Goal 1:** Establish evaluation and reporting processes to enhance data collection to drive future strategies and track progress in improving food security in Nevada.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Throughout 2019, the CFS focused on initiatives touching on all four (4) themes of the Food Security Plan. Initiatives included identifying and supporting state policies to increase food security in Nevada; enhancing collaboration efforts; supporting strategies to increase participation in state/federal nutrition programs; identifying and assessing statewide client-tracking databases; and supporting initiatives to strengthen Nevada's food system through reducing food waste through food rescue. Accomplishments are outlined below, per Food Security Plan theme.

1.1 LEAD

80th Nevada Legislative Session

The 80th Nevada Legislative Session ended June 4, 2019 and was a successful session for food security-related bills; many of which were championed/supported by the CFS and/or its members

and directly align with the Food Security Plan. Food security bills signed into law in the 80th Nevada Legislative Session include:

- [Senate Bill \(178\)](#): Creates the CFS and the Food for People, Not Landfills (FFPNL) Program
- [SB443](#): Appropriates money to increase rates of reimbursement for certain meal programs.
- [SB458](#): Makes an appropriation for the creation and maintenance of school gardens.
- [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 326](#): Establishes a program to provide loans to certain operators of grocery stores located in underserved communities.

Identifying and supporting state policies working to increase food security in Nevada will continue to remain a CFS focus and priority throughout 2020.

Policy Subcommittee

At the July 2019 CFS meeting, the CFS motioned to reinstitute the Policy Subcommittee. The Policy Subcommittee is tasked with identifying promising food security-related polices and presenting a policy agenda for the CFS's consideration in preparation for the Nevada 81st Legislative Session. The Policy Subcommittee is comprised of ten (10) members, including both voting and ex-officio members. Membership includes representation from the Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA), Three Square Food Bank, the Food Bank of Northern Nevada (FBNN), Helping Hands of Vegas Valley (HHOVV), and Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada. The Policy Subcommittee met twice in 2019 and plan to meet a minimum of four (4) additional times throughout 2020.

Technology Subcommittee

Upon recommendation of the 2018 CFS Policy Subcommittee, the Chair established the CFS Technology Subcommittee in September 2018 to assess existing client-tracking databases used in Nevada and nationally. The Subcommittee was comprised of seven (7) members, including representation from Three Square Food Bank, FBNN, HHOVV, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, and the Nevada DHHS GMU. Between November 2018 and June 2019, the CFS Technology Subcommittee met five (5) times to establish goals, learn about systems and discuss national resources and best practices, and make recommendations for the CFS's consideration regarding technology use among food security stakeholders statewide.

The Technology Subcommittee's goals were:

- 1) Learn about partners' existing database systems, national best practices, and the perspective of statewide agencies on technology use; and
- 2) Create a database systems/add-ons table or decision tree to present to the CFS for consideration and approval.

To assess systems, the Technology Subcommittee developed a set of standards identified as critical system features and capabilities. Each system was outlined in a comprehensive matrix according to the identified standards. Standards included, but were not limited to, cost, programs supported, Application Program Interface capabilities (APIs) to bridge systems and share data,

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliance, and the system's ability to track outcomes.

Ultimately, the Technology Subcommittee received additional information after their final meeting in June 2019 that impacted their findings and recommendations. The Technology Subcommittee's efforts/activities will be on-going throughout 2020.

Commission on Aging (CoA)/CFS Workgroup

In Fall 2018, the Nevada CoA developed a workgroup comprised of two (2) CoA members and two (2) CFS members to enhance collaboration and align efforts around CoA and CFS initiatives addressing hunger and nutrition among older Nevadans. The CoA/CFS workgroup met twice in 2018 and will continue to meet quarterly throughout 2020.

Nevada Local Food Policy Council Collaboration

To increase collaboration and engagement between the CFS and local food system/security efforts, the CFS invited a representative from two (2) local food policy councils, the Southern Nevada Food Policy Council and the Washoe County Food Policy Council, to share an overview of their council's history, partners, accomplishments, and barriers. The CFS agreed updates from the local food policy councils be an ongoing agenda item. Initiatives to support and leveraged the work of the local food policy councils will be ongoing throughout 2020.

1.2 FEED

Technology Subcommittee

See summary above.

Commission on Aging/Council on Food Security Workgroup

See summary above.

FFPNL Program

Per SB178, the FFPNL Program was established within DHHS to increase food security through decreasing food waste by redirecting excess consumable food to vulnerable, food insecure communities. To guide the creation of the FFPNL Program, including the development of the program's goals and objectives, the FFPNL Subcommittee was established at the July 2019 CFS meeting. The FFPNL Subcommittee is comprised of eleven (11) members, including both voting and ex-officio members. Membership includes representation from Three Square Food Bank, the FBNN, NDA, HHOVV, Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada, the Retail Association of Nevada (RAN), the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, and the Nevada Division of Welfare and Supportive Services (DWSS). The FFPNL Subcommittee will meet for the first time in January 2020 and a total of eight (8) times throughout 2020.

1.3 GROW

FFPNL Program

See summary above.

1.4 DATA

Research and Analysis Project

Following the issuance of the 2017 DHHS document *Nutrition Programs for Older Nevadans and Preliminary Recommendations*, the CFS motioned the creation of a Research and Analysis Project at the November CFS 2018 meeting to further assess current available services and unmet needs among Nevada's senior population. To gain a better understanding of the gaps in nutrition and supportive services, the project team developed and issued a survey to 175 private and public agencies statewide serving Nevada's senior population. The survey was issued in August 2019 through various channels include e-mail, telephone, and US mail. A total of 76 surveys were returned, yielding a 43% response rate. After reviewing the survey results, the project team proposed the following next steps to the CFS at the November 2019 meeting:

1. Distribute survey spreadsheet to 2-1-1, survey respondents, Three Square Food Bank, Dignity Health and other hospital systems, Medicaid, and others upon request;
2. Contact agencies who stated they did not track the number of seniors they were unable to serve, and share the "Survey of Seniors Unable to be Served" tool;
3. Sponsor a networking conference for agencies and organizations that deliver older adult services to enhance program integration and efficiency;
4. Create a statewide, county-specific, Geographic Information System (GIS) map identifying service agencies and organizations to assist in determining available resources; and,
5. Conduct a secondary analysis (survey) to better clarify service needs and barriers.

At the November 2019 meeting, the CFS agreed to consider these recommendations and support ongoing efforts of the Research and Analysis Project throughout 2020.

FUTURE FOCUS

Throughout 2020, the CFS will meet a minimum of four (4) times to discuss issues regarding food insecurity and associated social determinants. The CFS and OFS will continue implementing strategies related to the revised Food Security Plan, as well as working to identify and support food security-related policies in preparation for the 81st Nevada Legislative Session. The CFS will also explore/learn about race and gender equity throughout 2020 to develop an understanding of how an equity-lens can be applied to all CFS initiatives. Additional focus areas include continuation of the Research and Analysis Project and Technology Subcommittee efforts, enhanced collaboration with the CoA, local food policy councils, private sector organizations to enhance efforts, continued focus on initiatives addressing child and senior hunger, and development and execution of the FFNL program. An addendum to this report will be shared once specific goals/priorities around these areas are identified and established.

MEMBERS: NEVADA COUNCIL ON FOOD SECURITY

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Public Health Advisory Board
Southern Nevada Health District

Robert Thompson

Deputy Administrator
Division of Welfare and Supportive Services

Deacon Tom Roberts

President and Chief Executive Officer
Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada

Vacant

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

Vacant

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

Vacant - Representative identified

One member who is a representative of retailers of food.

Vacant

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

Vacant

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

Vacant – Representative identified

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

Vacant

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

Vacant - Representative identified

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

Vacant

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