

HEALTHY EATING ACTIVE LIVING

FOOD SYSTEM PARTNERS

Impacting the local meal-gap with nourishing food.



PROJECT PURPOSE:

To develop a community-based model of integration leveraging the strengths of numerous existing food systems programs whose primary mission is to improve the emergency food system by increasing healthy food access, advancing community education, and creating agricultural and community development opportunities using existing services and programs.

3 Project Objectives:

Objective 1: Increase Healthy Food Access

Objective 2: Advancing Community Education

Objective 3: Creating Economic, Community and Agricultural Development Opportunities

HEAL: Food System Partners have 4 established teams who work at achieving the 3 project objectives.

Team 1: Increasing Access

Team 2: Nutrition Education & Family Stabilization

Team 3: Pantry Technical Assistance

Team 4: Food Policy



History of Food System Partners

April 2019 – March 2020

Community Foundation of Central Illinois awarded the Ending Hunger Together grant to the HEAL Priority Action Team for efforts in improving the emergency food system. A collaboration team, **HEAL Food System Partners (HEAL FSP)** was formed with a mission to improve the emergency food system by increasing healthy food access, advancing community education, and creating agricultural and community development opportunities using existing services and programs. HEAL FSP's work began with 2 prototype projects:

- **Prototype Project 1** provides the Tri-County region with consistent access to fresh produce while improving economic developments, connecting existing community gardens, and improving education in meal planning and budgeting through community cooking classes.
- **Prototype Project 2** aims to improve the proportion of healthy foods offered to and selected by community members within the emergency food system.

April 2020 – March 2021

HEAL FSP was awarded the Ending Hunger Together grant to continue efforts in improving the emergency food system. The original two prototype projects continued the efforts to increase access to healthier food options and advance community nutrition education. Two additional teams were added to HEAL FSP with a focus on improving adult understanding of household budgeting, resources, increasing advocacy and support for local and healthy procured foods.

March 2021 – April 2022

HEAL FSP was awarded a third year of the Ending Hunger Together grant to continue efforts in improving the emergency food system. The four teams continued efforts and one additional team was formed. The fifth team aims to align food pantry policies and standards.

March 2022 – April 2023

HEAL FSP was awarded a fourth year of the Ending Hunger Together grant to continue efforts in improving the emergency food system. Two teams combined efforts moving HEAL FSP from five teams back to four.

- **Team 1** Improves the emergency food system by increasing access to healthier food options for vulnerable populations.
- **Team 2** Advancing community nutrition education and improving adult understanding of household budgeting and resources
- **Team 3** Aligning food pantry policies and standards
- **Team 4** Increases advocacy and support for local and healthy procured foods

Food System Partners Team Objectives

Team 1 - Increasing Access

- Connect and align assets within teams and communities related to supply chains, supply and demand, and connections of community members.
- Increase inventory of healthy options with the food banks, pantries, and markets.
- Provide mentoring, direction, and resources to local gardens through the garden network.
- Provide education on healthy eating and active living while promoting behavior change.

Team 2 - Nutrition Education & Family Sustainability

- Supporting implementation of good nutrition education and food inventory that is culturally matched within the charitable food system.
- Implementing good nutrition education among children from preschool to middle school ages.
- Implementing financial literacy education and food resource management among community members experiencing low income.
- Complete a resource package (playbook) to support the replication of nutritious food promotion within the charitable food system.

Team 3 - Pantry Technical Assistance

- Provide technical assistance for compliance with food safety standards within the emergency food system.
- Provide financial assistance to food pantries to be used for training, infrastructure, and other needs.
- Provide education to food pantries/food establishments to ensure food safety.

Team 4 - Food Policy

- Develop and support existing food policies to increase access to healthy, culturally relevant foods.
- Cultivate and support relationships between local farmers and the emergency/charitable food system to support the local economy, and to increase access to foods requested by pantry guests (healthy and culturally diverse foods).
- Evaluate the impact of healthy food policies on food producers, pantry partners, and food recipients.
- Increase collaboration between IL food banks.

HEAL FSP - Making a Local Impact



Team 1 - 2022 Grow A Row project donated 23,279 pounds of produce to the emergency food system. 24 gardens participated in the project harvesting 43 various types of produce - including fruits, vegetables, and herbs. The crop was donated to 31 charitable food organizations or directly to families for food security.

(Photo shows 1 of 24 gardens that participated in Grow A Row.)

Team 2 - Eatable Alphabet & Mobile Pantry

Three Head Starts sites participated in 4 weeks of the **Eatable Alphabet Curriculum**. Lessons use alphabet activity cards featuring foods that start with each letter. The cards guide preschool-aged children through activities in order to taste, prepare and experience food. 97 to 121 children and 5 to 15 caregivers participated in 4 lessons.

(Photo shows Children Enjoying an Eatable Alphabet Lesson.)



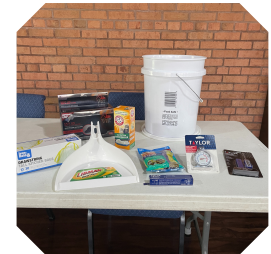
Six monthly **Mobile Pantry** events were held featuring Latin-inspired products and recipes with nutrition education. 277 cars were served, each representing multiple households with over 650 children served. Over 75% of participants identified as Hispanic and almost half had someone in the household with a cardiometabolic condition like diabetes or hypertension.

(Photo shows a Mobile Pantry.)

Team 3 - Food Safety Conference

21 Charitable Food Organizations attended the **Food Safety Conference** held to offer education on topics of food safety to organizations working within the emergency food system. Food pantries in attendance received a "food safety kit" for use within their pantries. In addition to the Food Safety Conference, Team 3 has awarded 7 pantries \$500 grants to purchase equipment to improve food safety within their pantry.

(photo shows the Food Safety Kit.)



Team 4 - BRIC Pantry Grants

Four pantries were chosen out of 11 to receive a \$2,000 **BRIC Pantry Grant**. Grant money could be used by pantries to impact and enhance their guest experiences and/or pantry operation through non-food purchases.

Refrigeration and freezers were chosen for purchase by many pantries allowing them to add perishable foods, such as milk, eggs, cheese, and meats for their guests.

(Photo shows a student at a local school pantry exploring the newly added pantry refrigerator.)

Additional 2022 Program Impacts

- 65 one-time **emergent food deliveries** were made - serving 106 adults and 64 children.
- 175 **food-related referrals** were received.
- **Community Garden Network - GIS Mapping** was created allowing users to see where a garden is located and if it is open to the public. Currently, 19 garden locations are mapped and 4 more will soon be added.

(Photo shows an emergent food delivery.)



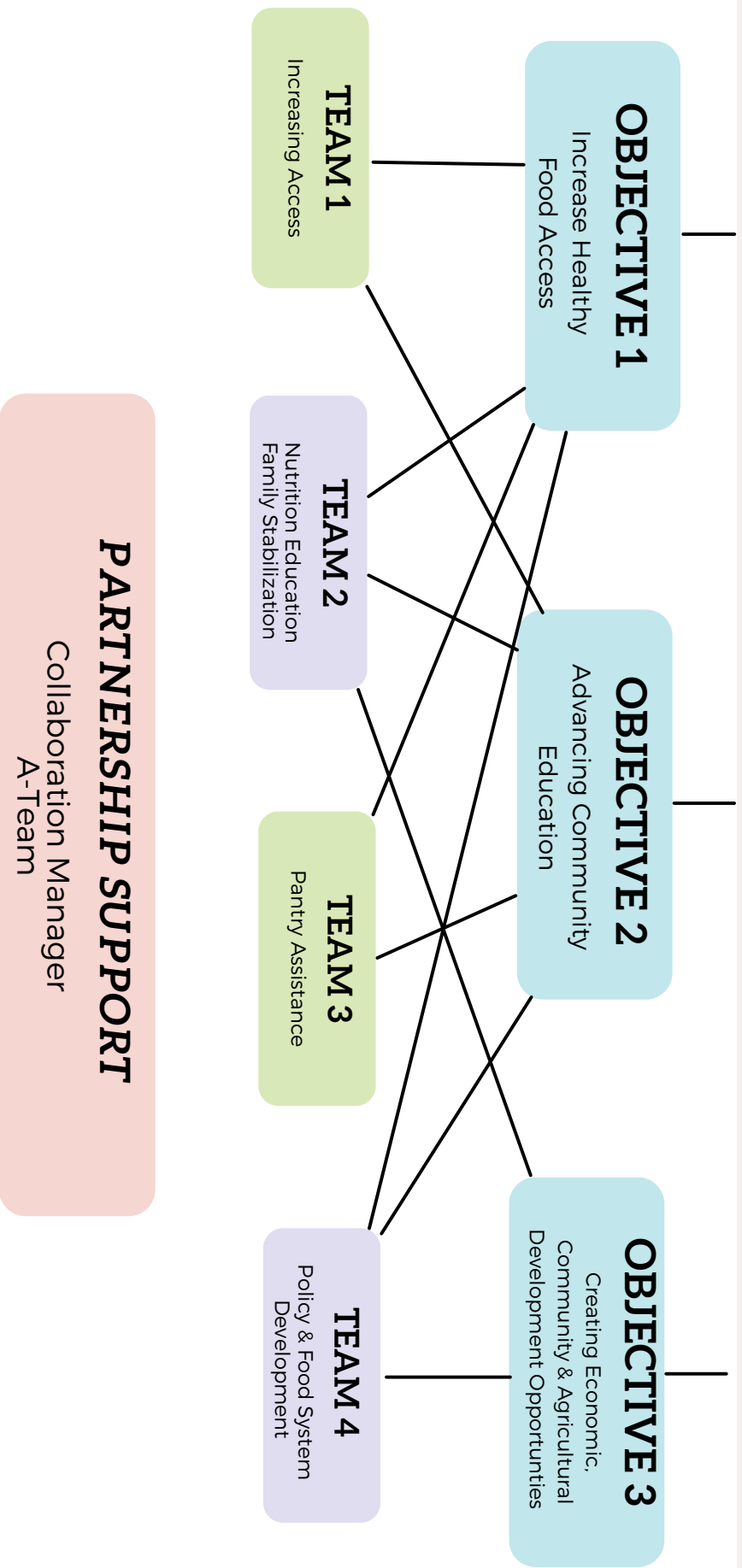
HEAL FSP - Collaborative Partners

- Basil's Harvest
- Feeding Illinois
- Food Pantry Network - HOI
- Heartland Health Services
- Midwest Food Bank
- OSF SFMC
- PAFB SNAP Enrollment
- PCCEO (Energy Assistance)
- Peoria Area Food Bank
- Peoria City/County Health Department
- Tazewell County Health Department
- Tazewood Community Services
- UICOMP
- U of I Extension Tazewell/Peoria
- U of I Extension Woodford/McLean
- UnityPoint
- Woodford County Health Department



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2022/2023 - Year 4 - Organizational Structure

