



Activity #7

***Appropriate for 5th grade and above- can be adapted for younger audiences.**

Responses to Hunger in the United States

Description:

Participants will identify, learn about, and list various community and government responses to hunger. By applying them to the family scenarios they have explored in Activity #6, they will learn how various programs work and gain an understanding of how they themselves can respond to hunger in their community.

Objective:

- Increase awareness about community and government responses to hunger.
- To explore some of the misconceptions and myths that surround both community and government responses to hunger.

Materials: Smart board, white board, or flipchart with markers

Time: 15 minutes

Activity Directions:

- Divide students into two groups.
- Ask one group to come up with a list of *community* responses to hunger and the other group to create a list of *government* responses to hunger. Some audiences may have more knowledge than others. It's important to explain that this is a brainstorm activity, and there are no wrong answers.

- You may have to give some examples: *An example of a community response to hunger is a food pantry or a homeless shelter. An example of a government response is Free or Reduced Lunch.*
- Ask each group to select a spokesperson.
- Once each group has reported, review and see if you can add any from the list below.

Community Responses to Hunger and Poverty

Food Drive: A community-wide effort sponsored by schools, faith-based groups, businesses, organizations, grocery stores, TV stations, food banks, and more, in which members of the community donate a certain amount of non-perishable food.

Food Bank: A non-governmental charitable organization that distributes food to shelters, community kitchens or other organizations to help feed the hungry.

Food Pantry: A place where those in need of food assistance receive a supply of food to take home and cook. Food is usually acquired from food banks and distributed through community centers and churches. (In 2009/10, an estimated 234,545 were served each month by ACFB partner agencies; this includes both food pantries and community kitchen programs. An estimated 2,814,540 people were served in 2009/10.)

Meals on Wheels: A food delivery program that delivers one meal a day to elderly people or people who are very ill and unable to leave their homes.

Shelter: A place that temporarily houses homeless people, usually overnight, sometimes for long stretches of time. Meals are usually served. Some shelters serve families; some serve individuals.

Community Kitchen: A place where a hungry and/or poor person receives a free meal. Most community kitchens are housed in churches or community buildings. (In 2009/10, an estimated 234,545 were served each month by ACFB partner agencies; this includes both food pantries and community kitchen programs. An estimated 2,814,540 people were served in 2009/10.)

Prepared and Perishable Food Rescue Program (PPFRP): Many local restaurants, hotels, caterers, grocery stores, school cafeterias, and special events donate left-over food to PPFRPs. These programs usually operate in partnership with a food bank and distribute the food to community kitchens, shelters and other feeding agencies. Atlanta's PPFRP is the ACFB's *Atlanta's Table* project.

Government Programs

Federal Nutrition Programs

The following programs assist individuals and households:

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

(Formerly Food Stamps) helps low-income individuals and families purchase food. More than half of food stamp recipients are children. Food stamps cannot be used to buy important non-food items (like toilet paper or soap). *The average monthly SNAP benefits/person in GA for 2009 was \$125.95. This breaks down to approximately \$4.15/day.*

WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants & Children) is a program that provides low-income pregnant women, new mothers, infants and children with nutritious foods, nutrition education, and improved access to health care in order to prevent nutrition-related health problems in pregnancy, infancy and early childhood.

School and Summer Meals (National School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program, and Summer Food Program) are subsidized programs that assist low income students to improve their nutritional status. These meals are available during the school year as well as during the summer months.

The following programs assist community organizations such as shelters and after school programs:

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP): provides resources to assist afterschool, homeless, and preschool programs in using the child nutrition programs.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP): provides USDA commodities to states that distribute the food through local emergency food providers like food banks.

Community Food and Nutrition Program: provides funding for anti-hunger and nutrition advocacy groups at the local, state and national levels.

For more information regarding the programs listed above and other Federal Nutrition Programs, visit: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/>

Government Programs that Respond to Poverty

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF):

In August 1996, what many people knew as "Welfare" changed in the United States - it became Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. The new system includes a series of block grants that the States administer. There is a limited amount of time that a person can receive assistance. Georgia citizens are limited to four years of assistance per lifetime. All TANF recipients are required to engage in some type of "work activity" to receive the benefit. The maximum monthly benefit for a family of three is \$280.00. In Georgia, the number of people enrolled in TANF has declined sharply in recent years despite poverty and unemployment rates that are rising.

For more information about the TANF Program visit:

www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/aofa

Earned Income Tax Credit:

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a refundable federal income tax credit for low-income working individuals and families. Congress originally approved the tax credit legislation in 1975 to offset the burden of social security taxes and to provide an incentive to work. When the EITC exceeds the amount of taxes owed, it results in a tax refund to those who claim and qualify for the credit.

To qualify, taxpayers must earn income from working and meet other requirements. They also must file a tax return, even if they did not earn enough money to be obligated to file a tax return.

The EITC has no effect on certain welfare benefits. In most cases, EITC payments will not be used to determine eligibility for Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), food stamps, low-income housing or most Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) payments.

Excerpted from Internal Revenue Service website:

<http://www.irs.gov/individuals/article/0,,id=150557,00.html>

For more information about EITC, visit: www.irs.ustreas.gov

Potential Government Responses to Family Scenarios

Use the following information to let students know which government programs the family scenarios in **Activity #6** might be eligible for.

Scenario #1

***Potentially eligible for:**

- SNAP (formerly Food Stamps)
- 1 and 4 year-old for Medicaid
- WIC (Women, Infants and Children)
- 7 year-old for PeachCare
- Subsidized childcare and energy assistance (if available)
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

Scenario #2

***Potentially eligible for:**

- SNAP (formerly Food Stamps)
- 3 year-old for Medicaid, 6 year-old for PeachCare.
- WIC (Women, Infants and Children)
- Subsidized childcare and energy assistance
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

Scenario #3

Not eligible for SNAP (formerly Food Stamps) – income is too high

***Potentially eligible for:**

- WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) for 2 and 4 year-old
- Medicaid or PeachCare for kids
- Subsidized childcare and energy assistance
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

Scenario #4

***Potentially eligible for:**

- SNAP (formerly Food Stamps) and WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)
- Medicaid
- Subsidized childcare and energy assistance
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

Scenario #5

***Potentially eligible for:**

- SNAP (formerly Food Stamps) and WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)
- Low income Medicaid for kids
- Subsidized Childcare
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

Scenario #6

***Potentially eligible for:**

- SNAP (formerly Food Stamps)
- Low income Medicaid
- Energy Services
- Aging Services (if available)
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

Scenario #7

Not eligible for SNAP (formerly Food Stamps) – income is too high.

***Potentially eligible for:**

- PeachCare
- WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)
- Subsidized childcare and energy assistance
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

Scenario #8

***Potentially eligible for:**

- SNAP (formerly Food Stamps)
- Medicaid and WIC (Women, Infants and Children)
- Subsidized childcare and energy assistance
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

Scenario #9

***Potentially eligible for:**

- SNAP (formerly food stamps (just barely))
- WIC, Medicaid (for 3 year old)
- PeachCare (for 9 and 12 year old)
- Subsidized childcare and energy assistance
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

Scenario #10

***Potentially eligible for:**

- SNAP (formerly food stamps)
- WIC, Medicaid
- Subsidized childcare and energy assistance
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

Scenario #11

***Potentially eligible for:**

- WIC
- Subsidized childcare and energy assistance
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

*It is important to recognize that being “**potentially eligible**” does not mean that people will have easy access to these benefits. Applying for these benefits is time consuming and often requires taking time off of work. Additionally, applicants may not meet all eligibility requirements.

Discussion Questions

- Were you previously aware of any of these different community and government responses to hunger? If so, which ones?
- To receive most government assistance, whether it's SNAP or TANF, requires meeting certain eligibility criteria. These criteria may include having children and earning under a certain income. What are some ways that having to meet criteria is helpful? What are ways that having to meet criteria could be harmful? *(Eligibility criteria can help to streamline access and screen for highest need, but it can also restrict access to programs to people in need.)*
- Some community responses to hunger and poverty (shelters, pantry programs, etc.) have established criteria to determine if they can serve an individual or family. For instance, some pantries will only see individuals who reside in a specific zip code or area, or who come to them with specific referrals. Why do you think programs establish this type of criteria? *(Many small non-profits or churches don't have the financial or volunteer support they need to serve everyone who comes to them. In some instances, they are working in collaboration with other non-profits/churches in their area and have established clear "lines of service".)*
- There are conflicting thoughts and opinions regarding government involvement in poverty and hunger issues. Prior to the Great Depression, there was no government involvement in these issues. There were "Poor Houses" or "Work Houses" and each community would decide how it would respond to those in need. What changes do you think would occur in this country if there was no government response to hunger?
- What might your own individual response to hunger be? What are some specific ways that you can join forces with both community and government responses to make a difference in your community? *(Becoming aware of the needs within your own community is a great place to start. Where can people go if they need help? Check in with local churches, and other agencies responding to hunger and poverty. What kind of support do they need?)*