

School-Based Health Center Food Security Continuum

Strategies for Supporting Students and Families

The purpose of this continuum is to provide strategies for supporting food security through school-based health centers, ranging from SNAP outreach to establishing onsite food resources. It outlines best practices, resource needs, and opportunities for youth engagement to support students and families in accessing essential food services. Use this continuum to identify interventions that best fit your school-based health centers (SBHCs) resources and capacity and dive deeper using the provided resource links.


Lowest Capacity Intervention

SNAP Outreach

Description

Provide information about SNAP and other federal food programs to all students. Provide a link to an eligibility screener.

Best Practice

Partner with local SNAP assistance organization to provide follow up application support. Check to see if your state has a preferred eligibility screener.

Resources

- [Request SNAP Outreach Resources](#)
- [SNAP Outreach in SBHCs webinar](#)



Staff Capacity
Low



Youth Engagement
Medium

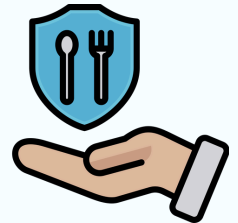
Youth design flyer with SNAP information. Youth advise on best locations or modalities for sharing resources



Cost
\$



Partnerships
Not required, but helpful



Food Resource List

Description

Research community food programs and provide up to date information about resources.

Best Practice

Identify a point of contact at each community resource and establish a warm handoff process. Partner with school district to share food resources broadly through schoolwide communications and events.

Resources

- [Asset Mapping Resources](#)
- [Health Source of OH resource map](#)



Staff Capacity
Low to Medium



Youth Engagement
Medium to High

Youth conduct research on available resources and distribute them to the community (create a flyer, social media campaign, student announcements or student newspaper columns, etc.)



Cost
\$



Partnerships
Not required but encouraged for warm handoff



Food Insecurity Screening and Referral to Offsite Food Resources or Application Assistance

Description

Establish a workflow to conduct food insecurity screening using validated screening tool. Refer students and families who screen positive for food insecurity to SNAP and local community food programs.

Best Practice

Food insecurity screening integrated in EHR. Staff are regularly trained in sensitive screening and referral resources.

Resources

- [Screening Tools](#)
- [Youth Healthcare Alliance Case Study](#)



Staff Capacity
High to start
Medium ongoing



Youth Engagement
Low

While youth cannot help directly with screening and referral, they can provide feedback on patient experience through a post survey or interview.



Cost
\$\$



Partnerships
Required for warm handoff referrals



Follow-Up Application Assistance or Resource Connection

Description

School-based health center or sponsor organization staff provide direct follow up to students and families who screen positive for food insecurity by assisting with SNAP enrollment and providing navigation to other community resources.

Best Practice

Enrollment specialists, CHWs, or Care Coordinators provide follow-up support to families. Closed loop referral documented in EHR.

Resources

- [Health Source of OH Case Study](#)
- [SDOH-Resources](#)
- [FindHelp](#)



Staff Capacity

High to start
Medium ongoing



Youth Engagement

Low to Medium

Youth provide feedback on their experience with community organizations or resources. This would help improve future referrals.



Cost

\$ - \$\$



Partnerships

Required with community referral organizations



Establishing Food Access Resources Onsite (School or Partner Sponsored)

Description

The school or a community based organization (CBO) establishes a program onsite to address immediate food needs. Examples include mobile food pantries or markets ; food closets or food boxes; and weekend backpack programs.

Best Practice

Food resource administered by school staff and/or CBO. SBHC makes referrals, assists with program coordination and promotion and/or provides funding and staff resources.

Resources

- [Toolkit Examples and Resources](#)
- [Youth Engagement Case Studies](#)



Staff Capacity

Medium to High



Youth Engagement

High

Youth provide feedback to partners on the food provided by outside program. Youth build food boxes or backpacks. Youth advertise these programs by leading marketing initiatives



Cost

\$\$\$



Partnerships

Required with school and/ CBO



Establishing Food Access Resources Onsite (SBHC Sponsored)

Description

SBHC or sponsor organization establishes a program onsite to address immediate food needs. Examples include food pantry, closet or food box; produce rx (voucher) program; a garden; and nutrition or cooking education classes.

Best Practice

Food resource administered by the SBHC, including funding, staffing, logistics, food sourcing, promotion, and partnership development.

Resources

- [Promising Practices for Starting and Maintaining a School Food Pantry](#)
- [Implementing a Produce Rx Program in Healthcare Settings](#)



Staff Capacity

High



Youth Engagement

High

Youth are involved in program concept and development. Youth provide volunteer support or lead program activities. Youth advertise these programs by leading marketing initiatives.



Cost

\$\$\$\$



Partnerships

Required with school, CBOs, and/or donors



Highest Capacity Intervention