

# BUCKNELL DESIGN-A-THON

## FOOD INSECURITY

**Community Partner:**  
*Union-Snyder Hunger Coalition*

The **Union-Snyder Hunger Coalition** is a network made up of over 100 individuals and organizations doing and/or interested in food security work in the Union and Snyder Counties. Members include social service agencies, food pantry and other food access program representatives, community organizations, community gardens and campus farms, and area school and university members. The network meets every other month in order to increase collaboration and coordination within the existing charitable food system with the aim to create community-wide food solutions and address food insecurity on the community level.

### CONTACT:

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### OFFICE HOURS:

Friday – 9:00 - 10:00 am  
Saturday – 11:00-12:00 pm

**SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CHALLENGES:**

## CHALLENGE 1: ACCESS & DISTRIBUTION

*Design storage solutions at local Little Free Pantries that comply with food safety.*

[Read more about this challenge on page 4.](#)

## CHALLENGE 2: EDUCATION

*Fight the stigma in seeking/accepting food assistance through an education campaign.*

[Read more about this challenge on page 6.](#)

## CHALLENGE 3: COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION

*Design a communication platform for the high number of impactful food access programs brought together through the Hunger Coalition.*

[Read more about this challenge on page 7.](#)

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## HISTORY

For the past several years, a network of community and campus gardens from across the region have come together at the annual Sowing Change conference to share knowledge and strengthen efforts aimed to expand sustainable growing practices and food security in the area. This effort was led by staff at Bucknell and Susquehanna Universities and the Union Snyder Community Action Agency. As such, attendance at the annual conference was historically dominated by members of higher education institutions with limited participation from members of the broader community.

In recognition of Sowing Change’s lack of relevance to the community in its current form, the group has transitioned to form the Union-Snyder Hunger Coalition led by the Union-Snyder Community Action Agency and their three-year VISTA project. This transition was designed to create a shift in focus to one that is community-centered rather than university-centered. Nevertheless, the Union-Snyder Hunger Coalition will rely on the foundations of the Sowing Change group in order to build a coalition of organizations and individuals who are committed to increasing food security in the region.

## THE NEED: FOOD INSECURITY IN OUR COMMUNITY

Overall, approximately 9,000 people in Union and Snyder counties are currently food insecure, with an expected 5% increase as a result of the current COVID-19 pandemic (Feeding America, 2020). Often, families in these circumstances rely on low-cost, low-nutrient foods in order to provide the quantity of food necessary for all family members to survive day to day. Children experiencing food insecurity, hunger, and inadequate nutrition have increased health and educational difficulties, which can include developmental, social, and behavioral challenges. Food insecure adults are also prone to health challenges which may limit their ability to participate fully in work, schooling, family, and community. Limited education and limited earning potential then root these families firmly in the cycle of poverty and hunger. It is clear that there not every family in our region has steady access to nutritious foods and that there are long-term impacts associated with living in these circumstances.

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The prevalence of food insecurity exists despite the high number of impactful food access programs in the region. In fact, there are over 40 programs and/or organizations working to address food insecurity in Union and Snyder counties.

In general, the food solutions in this are focus on the immediate need of getting people food sourced by an individual organization. There is a need for increased communication and collaboration between the existing food access programs in order to be able to impact food insecurity on the community level through systems-level solutions.

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## CHALLENGE 1: ACCESS & DISTRIBUTION

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***Design storage solutions at local Little Free Pantries that comply with food safety.***

Little free pantries have been popping up across the United States and, more recently, in our communities mirroring the existence of Little Free Libraries. These pantries are open to the public 24/7 and exist as a community resource of free food at a variety of community locations. In our area, there are Little Free Pantries located in downtown Lewisburg, West Milton, and Selinsgrove. These pantries are a form of community care that exist without strings attached and/or eligibility requirements providing open access to food.

The Little Free Pantries in our area are interested in continuing to serve their communities and the need that exists, but they are up against challenges in their storage capacities, especially in regard to food safety guidelines, and their sustainability. Most Little Free Pantries are structures that exist outside and therefore food at the pantry is stored at outdoor temperatures, which are not always in the ideal temperature range. Ensuring that food is safely distributed is key in offering food assistance that maintains the dignity of the human seeking assistance.

### ***Suggestions, things to consider***

- Set up open hours for the Free Pantry (ex. 3-5pm, daily) when food is set out for the public and then returned to safe storage conditions in between distribution times
- Build permanent fridge/shelving unit that offers protection from outdoor weather and provides proper storage
- Build mobile storage unit that is temperature-controlled and can be open when offering distribution times
- Create ordering system for pick-up, so that food is stored properly and then pulled when requests come in

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## **CHALLENGE 1: ACCESS & DISTRIBUTION**

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### **Resources**

General Food Safety Resources through the Central PA Food Bank  
Food Storage Guidelines:

[https://www.centralpafoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/FINAL-Food-Storage-Guidelines\\_TD\\_11\\_2019.pdf](https://www.centralpafoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/FINAL-Food-Storage-Guidelines_TD_11_2019.pdf)

Little Free Pantry Network:

<https://www.littlefreepantry.org/>

Lewisburg Little Free Pantry:

<https://www.facebook.com/LewisburgPAFreePantry/>

West Milton Little Free Pantry:

<https://www.facebook.com/ourlittlefreepantrywestmilton/>

Selinsgrove Little Free Pantry:

<https://www.facebook.com/DowntownSelinsgrove/posts/3509391289088498>

Community Fridges:

[https://why.org/articles/people-are-putting-stocked-fridges-on-philly-side-walks/?fbclid=IwAR2tn6hD4FMZvkc0iSCx0IG\\_wzwbSDWkdnfQOoEqBg\\_NqFWcEeuTV-f6l9A](https://why.org/articles/people-are-putting-stocked-fridges-on-philly-side-walks/?fbclid=IwAR2tn6hD4FMZvkc0iSCx0IG_wzwbSDWkdnfQOoEqBg_NqFWcEeuTV-f6l9A)

BUCKNELL  
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EDUCATION**

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***Fight the stigma in seeking/accepting food assistance through an education campaign.***

Whether through federal or local programs, there is stigma associated with seeking and/or accepting food assistance that ultimately causes fewer people that need food, getting it. This stigma is evidenced by the fact that people will avoid distributions due to their visibility in the community, they will feel the need to clarify when they're picking up food for someone else, and so on. To contextualize this issue further, one of the strengths in operating food assistance initiatives out of the Union County Food Hub at the Miller Center is the fact that there are many different elements of the Miller Center (childcare, physical therapy, gym, and now Food Hub) that many different people may be accessing the space for, therefore making it unclear what any given person is there for when they are seen walking in the door.

Stigma is especially an issue within backpack programs in that they are non-existent in high schools where older children will be able to pick up on what's happening when students receive a pack of food every month and kept very secretive in the name of being discreet when they do exist. This limits the amount and types of items that students receive through backpack programs because packs are limited in size in the name of discreetness.

***Suggestions, things to consider***

- Stigma reduction campaigns via radio/TV/billboards/social media

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*Design a communication platform for the high number of impactful food access programs brought together through the Hunger Coalition.*

A large driving factor in establishing the Union-Snyder Hunger Coalition was to increase communication between programs, so that there is greater community-wide knowledge on food solutions, opportunities for collaboration abound, and the overlaps in services are minimized. The network now exists and internal communication streams among Coalition members are being established with Google Drive and Google email lists. Now, the need for a public facing communication forum is needed to advertise events, share resources, and act as the “voice” of food insecurity for the region.

***Suggestions, things to consider***

- Public facing website with announcement forum, Coalition member login, resources page - including funding information/opportunities
- Facebook page

***Resources***

Coalition models & their websites:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/14GjmRtCHtsf\\_ByoN3aozAOszEyg5NtxdJ3QZOM\\_Ytd4/edit#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/14GjmRtCHtsf_ByoN3aozAOszEyg5NtxdJ3QZOM_Ytd4/edit#gid=0)