



# NASDA FOOD SECURITY TOOLKIT

A RESOURCE FOR STATE COMMISSIONERS, SECRETARIES AND  
DIRECTORS OF AGRICULTURE





# FOREWORD



“As the leaders of the state agriculture departments, NASDA members are constantly searching for innovative ways to advance agriculture in our states and reduce hunger across the nation. NASDA is well positioned to take on food insecurity due to NASDA members’ position to influence policy, their closeness to America’s farmers and ranchers, their ability to connect all facets of the food supply chain and duty to serve their states.

For more than 100 years, NASDA members have understood that partnerships are an important tool for improving food security, but this project aims to take a closer look at

exactly what partnerships are the most effective and identify resources and ideas to share amongst fellow commissioners, secretaries and directors of agriculture.

The NASDA Food Security Toolkit highlights what our members are already doing to reduce hunger and offers examples for how we can learn from each other to ensure every American has access to fresh and nutritious food. It is unacceptable that one in nine Americans are considered to be food insecure. Sharing best practices will help us achieve a more food secure nation.”

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ryan Quarles".

Dr. Ryan Quarles  
NASDA President & Kentucky Commissioner of Agriculture

# INTRODUCTION

U.S. farmers, ranchers and producers have reached production heights only dreamed of by earlier generations; however, today one in nine people struggle with hunger in the United States. While American farmers produce an abundance of nutritious food, the fact that people remain food insecure demonstrates that more partnerships and connections must be built into our food systems to ensure everyone is well fed.

This toolkit illustrates successful state department of agriculture-led food security partnerships that can be replicated or modified to work in other states looking to build on current programs or initiate new ones.

## DEFINING THE TERMS

Through NASDA's data collection process and the final toolkit, the terms "food security," "food insecurity," and "food desert" are used. NASDA uses the U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service's definition of these terms:

Food Security: Food security means access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.

Food Insecurity: Food insecurity is the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.

Food Desert: Areas with limited access to supermarkets, supercenters, grocery stores, or other sources of healthy and affordable food.

This toolkit illustrates that when state departments of agriculture partner with other entities, state residents become more food-secure and farmers, ranchers and food producers benefit from wider market access. The toolkit analyzes state agriculture departments' existing food security programs and partnerships and offers states resources needed to create programs that eliminate food insecurity in the United States. It also highlights food security initiatives prior to COVID-19 and initiatives that emerged because of the pandemic. Survey data was collected through 2020, and therefore, some programs described represent food security initiatives created in response to the pandemic. NASDA intends for this toolkit to increase dialogue amongst state agriculture department leaders on the most effective methods to form partnerships and create programs to eliminate food insecurity across the United States.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Inspired by NASDA members' unique ability to form partnerships across the food supply chain and influence food and agriculture policy, this project was led by NASDA President Dr. Ryan Quarles. NASDA would like to thank the NASDA Foundation for their contributions to the NASDA Food Insecurity Survey and the NASDA members and state department of agriculture staff who took time to participate in building this toolkit.

# PARTNERSHIPS - WHO STATE DEPARTMENTS OF AGRICULTURE ARE WORKING WITH

**NASDA's survey of state departments of agriculture found that successful state food security programs involve partnerships. Of the forms that partnerships can take, state departments of agriculture reported success from engaging in Public-Private Partnerships, Food Policy Councils and Federal Grant Programs.**

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## PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Public-Private Partnerships allow state and private groups to multiply efforts and resources to reach people experiencing food insecurity. As defined by [World Bank](#), Public-Private Partnerships are a contract between a private party and a government entity for providing a public asset or service. In this toolkit, state departments of agriculture serve as the government entity in the public-private partnerships, community food and other businesses serve as the private party, and the public asset provided as the result of the partnership is greater food security.

## FOOD POLICY COUNCILS

[Food Policy Councils](#) are committees of community leaders who evaluate and address food system issues through policy-based solutions. Stakeholders vary in their background and knowledge of the food system, but most groups include leaders from agriculture, health, environment and economic development sectors. Food Policy Councils can provide an organized approach to assessing, developing and implementing a path to eliminate food insecurity in states and localities.

## FEDERAL GRANT PROGRAMS

Federal grant programs make funding available for states to implement programs that accomplish shared goals between federal agencies and state agencies. Throughout this toolkit, state departments of agriculture partner with federal agencies such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture.



# SUCCESSFUL STATE-LED PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO INCREASE FOOD SECURITY

**Every state faces its own unique circumstances around food insecurity. Below are programs that state departments of agriculture have enacted, that have proven to be successful and can be replicated or modified to work in other states.**

## PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

NASDA Finding: State departments of agriculture can benefit from public and private partnerships around food security and make a larger impact than they would operating alone. Tapping into supply chains, retailers, wholesalers and producers allows a larger reach for states to provide nutritious food to people who experience food insecurity. Through feedback from state departments of agriculture, NASDA found that developing policies within public-private partnerships is a vital component of their success.

### Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

The [Virginia Food Access Investment Fund Program](#) uses the [Equitable Food Oriented Distribution](#) model to support food access and equity projects by investing in new or expanding food retailers that address food access issues in the Commonwealth. The program uses a rubric to determine project eligibility that could easily be used in other states.

### Hawaii Department of Agriculture

Hawaii's [Aloha + Challenge](#) has a goal of doubling local food production in their state by the year 2030 to help combat hunger.

### Idaho State Department of Agriculture

Idaho's [Community Donation Gardening Program](#) donates produce to local food banks and assists with food aid programs to help find locally sourced food.

### Arkansas Department of Agriculture

The [Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance](#) started a gleaning program more than 10 years ago that has been used as a model for other states. The alliance uses volunteers for gleaning events across the state and works closely with the Arkansas Department of Corrections for the use of inmate labor at some sites.

### Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Florida's [Food Recovery Program](#) works with farmers to collect surplus produce through gleaning and provides schools with guidance on food waste audits, share tables, food donations and composting.

### Kentucky Department of Agriculture

Kentucky's [Farms to Food Banks](#) partnership has been successful since 2011 providing over [18.5 million](#) pounds of produce to needy families. The program encourages farmers to glean produce that is still good to eat but cannot be sold. Kentucky farmers who participate in Farms to Food Banks receive a state tax credit.



NASDA Finding: Thirty percent of state departments of agriculture hold public-private partnerships with food banks and other private community groups.

#### Tennessee Department of Agriculture

Tennessee has found success by partnering with [Cul2vate](#), a faith-based farm worker training and hunger relief program. Located in Nashville, Tennessee, the nonprofit produces and donates thousands of pounds of produce each year to local hunger relief programs and serves as a demonstration farm.

#### California Department of Food and Agriculture

California partners with the [California Association of Food Banks](#) that delivers 160 million pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables to food banks around the state. Farmers who donate surplus to the food banks are eligible for a 15 percent state tax credit. The program provides a small fee for the “pick and packers.”

#### Connecticut Department of Agriculture

Connecticut works with The Salvation Army to provide nonperishable food boxes at COVID-19 testing sites. Partners include the National Guard, Emergency Management Regional Coordinators, colleagues and universities and private businesses.

#### Delaware Department of Agriculture

Delaware’s [First Chance Delaware](#) encourages public, private, non-profit, philanthropic, business entities and community partnerships that work to end childhood hunger and expand access to nutritious food for low-income children.

#### New York Department of Agriculture and Markets

[Nourish New York](#) is a response to the needs created by the pandemic and connects farms with the emergency food system. \$35 million has been allocated to 10 major food banks in New York to purchase directly from New York farms.



*Tennessee Commissioner of Agriculture Charlie Hatcher D.V.M. and Tennessee First Lady Maria Lee harvest produce for the Cul2vate program (June 2020).*



NASDA Finding: Livestock and wild game programs are a successful option for providing families with nutritious protein. Partnerships with youth organizations such as The National FFA Organization and 4-H can contribute significantly to these types of programs.

#### West Virginia Department of Agriculture

West Virginia established [Hunters Helping the Hungry](#) over 30 years ago with the assistance of two area food banks that have provided 1,026,593 pounds of venison to families in need.

#### Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship

Iowa has launched four programs that connect the food supply chain with food insecure Iowans:

- o [Pass the Pork](#) farmers donate pigs for processing and the meat is given to families in need.

- o [Beef Up Iowa](#) beef is donated to Iowa State University meat processing lab mostly by 4-H and FFA members. The CARES Act funds cover the costs associated with these donations from youth organizations.

- o [Turkey to Table](#) Iowa producers, markets, food pantries and other private organizations partner together to provide turkey to needy families. CARES funds are available to help cover these costs.

- o [Pack the Pantry](#) is a grant program supported by CARES funding that allows food pantries to apply for funds to purchase cooling units to be able to refrigerate more fresh foods for hungry families.



*Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig and Pass the Pork partner organization staff fill a truck destined for local food banks with pork donated and processed by Iowa farmers and producers.*

## FOOD POLICY COUNCILS

### NASDA Findings:

- o Two-thirds of NASDA members have developed policy through Food Policy Councils to reduce food waste and increase food security in their states.
- o 30% of states have adopted programs that encourage producers to donate surplus or blemished items to local food banks.
- o 7% of states have programs that give grocery stores and wholesale retailers' certain liability protections from lawsuits when donating food.

### West Virginia Department of Agriculture

West Virginia worked with partners to raise awareness about legislative opportunities to fight food insecurity. The success of these partnerships led to additional state funding.

### Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry

Oklahoma has created [grants for grocery stores](#) in food deserts.

### Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Florida passed the [Ms. Willie Ann Glenn Act](#) that requires each school district to develop a plan to sponsor or operate a summer nutrition program.

### Oregon Department of Agriculture

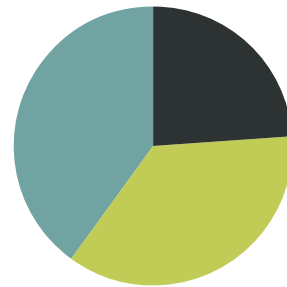
The [Oregon Hunger Response Fund](#), covers approximately five percent of regional food banks' expenses for capacity and infrastructure, such as warehousing, cold storage, transportation, and some programmatic costs. Some funds are distributed evenly, and some are distributed based on a formula that includes unemployment rate and those in poverty level. Some funds are set aside for Oregon Farm Bureau to procure food – such as “pick and pack out” and funds to repackage those foods for distribution.

NATIONWIDE PERCENTAGE OF STATE DEPARTMENTS OF REVENUE THAT PROVIDE TAX INCENTIVES FOR FARMERS WHO DONATE TO CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

NO 40%

OTHER 24%

YES 36%





## FEDERAL GRANT PROGRAMS

NASDA Finding: As co-regulators with the federal government, NASDA members work in close state-federal partnerships on a range of programs. For food security programs, flexibility to use federal resources to meet the needs food insecure people has been a key to success.

### Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

[Pennsylvania Agricultural Surplus System](#) program makes connections between production agriculture and the non-profit sector responsible for distributing nutritious food to Pennsylvanians at risk of hunger. PASS allows Pennsylvania's agricultural industry to donate safe food products while being reimbursed for the costs involved in harvesting, processing, packaging and transporting these foods. Since the program's start in 2016, more than 18 million pounds of Pennsylvania-produced product have been distributed to those in need of food assistance.

### New Mexico Department of Agriculture

New Mexico and Maryland participate in [SNAP-Ed programs](#) which provide additional funds to families and senior food assistance benefits so food from local farmers markets can be purchased. This program benefits local economies while bringing fresh foods into homes.

### Missouri Department of Agriculture

Missouri participates in the [Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program](#) funded by USDA. The program creates an additional resource for seniors, and the benefit doesn't affect any SNAP or medical assistance they may receive.

### Nevada Department of Agriculture

Nevada's [Breakfast After the Bell](#) requires all Nevada schools with 70 percent or greater free/reduced lunch eligibility to implement an option for students to have access to breakfast after the start of the school day. After the funding was completed for program implementation, Nevada saw a greater increase in USDA School Breakfast enrollment.

### Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

Wisconsin's [Food Security Initiative](#) (funded by the federal Coronavirus Relief Fund) was incredibly successful. It provided \$5 million in funds to help the food insecurity network adapt to the increased demand during COVID-19 through infrastructure investments and \$20 million for the purchase of food with an emphasis on Wisconsin products.



*Photos from local farmers markets participating in New Mexico's SNAP-Ed Double Up Food Bucks program.*

# RESOURCES

NASDA recommends utilizing the following organizations and tools based on responses in the food security survey from NASDA members.

[Hunger Relief Organizations](#)

[The Food and Nutrition Service Programs](#)

[Food First & Community Food Security Coalition Report, "Food Policy Councils: Lessons Learned"](#)

[USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture Hunger Food & Security Programs](#)

[The Food Industry Association: Tips From Grocery Store, Manufactures & Other Partners](#)

# CONCLUSION

NASDA survey data concludes that when state departments of agriculture partner with other entities, state residents become more food-secure and farmers, ranchers and food producers within the state benefit from wider market-access.

**"NASDA members understand that no one group, state or organization can take on the issue of food insecurity alone and succeed. Pursuing partnerships extends our reach, reveals new perspectives, multiplies our impact and inspires others to engage and take action."**



Dr. Barb Glenn  
NASDA CEO

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**NASDA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit association which represents the elected and appointed commissioners, secretaries and directors of the departments of agriculture in all fifty states and four U.S. territories. NASDA grows and enhances American agriculture through policy, partnerships and public engagement. Learn more about NASDA at [www.nasda.org](http://www.nasda.org).**