



Ohio
Smart
Agriculture
SOLUTIONS FROM THE LAND

Access to Nutritious Food Work Group Interim Report March 2018

Mission Statement:

Building on the work of food system stakeholders with a focus on food security and health impacts, develop strategies through which Ohio food and agriculture can help ensure that all Ohioans have equitable access to adequate, affordable and nutritious food for an active, healthy life.

Preliminary Findings:

- a) Ohio is the 12th most food insecure state and ranks 38th in food security nationally compared to other states; 1 in 7 households and 1 in 5 children experience food insecurity; poverty and lack of being able to earn a living wage is a root cause; complicating factors - literacy, health, opioid epidemic
- b) State lacks a comprehensive approach for addressing the challenges of food and nutrition security, and the connections to Ohio agriculture
- c) Ohio's agricultural community is an integral solution to food insecurity
- d) There are currently many efforts across the state to address food insecurity, and the solutions will require multi-stakeholder collaboration from across the food system, including recommendations below:

Initial Recommendations and Launching Pad Initiatives:

- **Support Ohio Farmers Impact on Food Insecurity** – Ohio farmers play an important role in providing food to food insecure Ohioans
 - Connect Ohio farmers to existing programs
 - Increase gleaning programs
 - Scale and grow agriculture clearance programs
 - Leverage/enhance the effectiveness of institutions (e.g., schools, churches and hospitals) in underserved areas purchasing Ohio farm products
 - Advocate for successful existing nutrition education programs
- **Initiate Education, Outreach and Advocacy** – Ohio farmers play an important role as a stakeholder in the food system and addressing food insecurity
 - Establish a speakers bureau of farm leaders that can talk to the agricultural community about food insecurity and the connection with Ohio agriculture
 - Support agri-education

- Align Ohio agriculture efforts with other food, nutrition and health, and economic development partners to advocate for public policy priorities surrounding food insecurity (e.g., organize a state level “Farm, Food and Health Partners” alliance)
- **Establish the Agrifood System as a Public Policy Priority** – A systemic, state-wide approach should be taken to address agriculture, food, and food insecurity
 - Integrate government agencies and programs involving farming, food and nutrition; create an Ohio Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition
 - Provide leadership in helping establishing a state-wide food strategy that addresses food insecurity from producer to consumer. Ex. Update the [2009 state-funded Ohio Food Policy Advisory Council plan](#) and integrate it with the Ohio Food Policy Network_Report - Mapping the Vision for the Future of Ohio’s Food System
 - Maximize use and increase public commitment to programs that directly connect Ohio production to low-income families (e.g., Produce Perks, prescription programs for local fruit and vegetables, Community Food Initiatives’ Donation Station program, WIC coupons at farmers markets)
 - Support livable wages in the food system, including farmers, farm labor, and other workers in the food industry
 - Invest in economic development (market and infrastructure initiatives) that will improve access for underserved Ohioans
 - Strengthen communication and connection between organizations/initiatives state-wide (public-private partnerships through a state-wide food policy council). Ex. Ohio Food Policy Network
 - Explore options to address food insecure people who do not qualify for existing state and Federal programs