



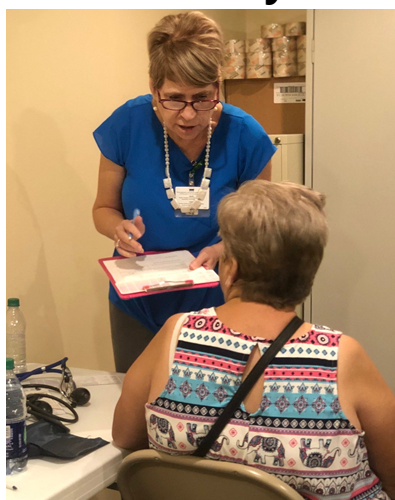
Supporting Southern Illinois Food Pantries

Mission

Coming together to reduce hunger and improve the health & well-being of our communities through access to healthy & nutritious food, education, resources, and advocacy.

The Southern Illinois Food Pantry Network provides an opportunity for food pantry managers and volunteers to connect with other area pantries and community partners. The Network works collaboratively to provide education, training, and resources to support food pantry operations and positively impact community health. According to Feeding America's *Map the Meal Gap*, more than 45,000 (14.3%) southern Illinoisans struggle with having enough food to eat and rely on our food pantries. The food insecurity rate among children range by county from 17.9% to 29.5%, translating to over 12,000 hungry children in southern Illinois.

Community Health Screenings



Community health professionals partner with food pantries to conduct health screenings such as blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar to reach high-risk individuals who may not otherwise seek health care services. The health screenings offer an opportunity to provide health education as well as necessary medical referrals. SIH collaborated with community partners to organize 7 free health fair / screening events held at food pantries and mobile markets. During these screening events, 156 low-income community members were screened. Over half (58%) required medical referrals and two required emergency care.

Partners:

Area Food Pantries,
Jackson County
Health Department,
SIU Medicine - Center
for Rural Health & Social
Service Development,
SIU - Human Nutrition &
Dietetics,
Southern Illinois Community
Foundation,
SIH,
University of Illinois Extension,
WSIL-TV 3

Supporting Healthy Food Donations

Nearly 1 in 3 U.S. adults with a chronic disease has problems paying for food, medicine, or both. Many of these individuals rely on food pantries to support their nutrition needs therefore it is crucial that food pantries are stocked with healthy foods. During an analysis of several local food drives, it was determined that only 14.1% could be categorized as healthy or "choose often." The Network has developed the "Nourish Your Neighbor" campaign and toolkit to support food pantries and community organizations in hosting healthier food drives.



Connect with us:

www.hsidn.org/sifpn



Food Pantries Build Capacity

With very tight budgets, food pantries are always working to identify additional opportunities for support. The Network has been able to support food pantries in sharing grant information, providing technical assistance on grant applications, and supporting funding distribution.

Recent funding opportunities supporting local food pantries have come from:

- Ameren Illinois – Ameren Cares
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois
- Illinois COVID-19 Response Fund
- Southern Illinois Community Foundation
- SIH
- SIH Foundation

Food pantries have used this funding to support their increased need for food, increase storage capacity of perishable food items by adding more refrigerator and freezer space, upgrade technology, purchase cleaning supplies and toiletries, and increase nutrition education and resources for pantry clients.

Encouraging Healthy Eating

Food pantries can support their clients in having a healthier diet by introducing new foods and offering a tasting of these foods. Finding a recipe that is healthy, tasty, has few ingredients, and easy to prepare can be a challenge for both food pantries and clients. Preparing Sautéed Parsnips & Carrots during regular pantry hours allowed the food pantry to share ideas for some "not so popular" vegetables. In just two sampling events with the recipe, 84% of the tasters said they were likely to make the recipe at home and all of them said they would be excited to see more tastings and recipes provided by the food pantry.

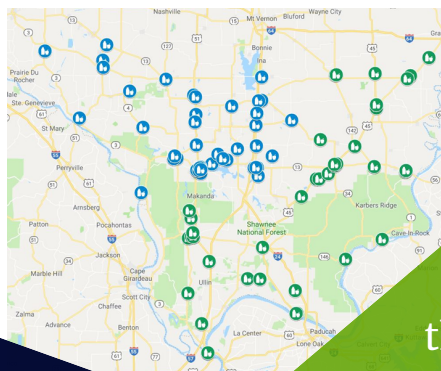


Supporting Local Food Pantries

Find a food pantry near you: <https://www.hsidn.org/area-food-pantries>

- Make a healthy food donation to your local food pantry.
- Make a financial contribution to your local food pantry.
- Volunteer time at your local food pantry.
- Make a financial contribution to the SI Food Pantry Network: <https://www.sicf.org/sifpn>

The Southern Illinois Food Pantry Network encompasses approximately 95 food pantries in the lower 16 counties of southern Illinois.



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