**Strengthening Communities: Food Access at Your Library**

<https://www.webjunction.org/events/webjunction/food-access-at-your-library.html>

Libraries across the country are increasingly working to address food insecurity in their local communities. Presenters from the South Carolina State Library, University of South Carolina Arnold School of Public Health SNAP-Ed program, and Richland Library will provide examples of library food access initiatives including seed libraries, community gardens and farmers markets. Guidance will be provided on how to start food access initiatives with limited local partnership options, few staff and limited resources in rural, urban and suburban settings. The session will also explore how two statewide organizations support local libraries in this work through technical assistance and funding.

Presented by: **Carrie Draper**, MSW, Senior Research Associate, Department of Health Promotion, Education, and Behavior, University of South Carolina Arnold School of Public Health; **Ashley Page**, MSW, SNAP-Ed Program Coordinator, Arnold School of Public Health, University of South Carolina; **Leighan Cazier**, Experience Support Specialist, Richland Library; and **Rebecca Antill**, Youth Services Consultant, Library Development, South Carolina State Library

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| **What are your goals for viewing this webinar?** | |
| **Personal Goals** |  |
| **Team Goals** |  |
| **Assessing Food Security Needs** | |
| To take steps towards growing food access at your library, begin by assessing current food insecurity in your community. This information will help you plan and to explain the community need to your organization and other stakeholders. Here are a few resources for research:   * Visit [Feeding America’s Map the Meal Gap](http://map.feedingamerica.org/) resource to learn more about adult and family food insecurity in your area. * Look up the number of students on free and reduced lunch at your local school districts using the [Kids Count Data Center](http://datacenter.kidscount.org/locations) (Annie E. Casey Foundation). * Determine if your library is in a USDA classified food desert by using the [Food Access Research Atlas](https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/) and think about how that might inform the services your community has or needs. | |
| **Access to Healthy Foods: Challenges and Assets** | |
| With information about your community’s food security needs, consider/discuss these questions:  What are some of the main **challenges** your community faces when it comes to access to healthy foods?  What are some of the main **strengths or assets** your community has when it comes to access to healthy foods? | |
| **Potential Responses** | |
| Consider potential library responses to help meet the food security needs of your community. Consider examples shared in the webinar, including a farmer’s market, community garden or seed library. (See also, [Growing Library Garden Programs](https://www.webjunction.org/news/webjunction/growing-library-garden-programs.html), a collection examples of library gardens and seed libraries.)  1.  2.  3.  4.  5. | |
| **Connecting with Partners** | |
| In the webinar, you learned about the agencies collaborating in South Carolina to increase food access through public libraries. Begin to explore potential collaborators on the [SNAP-Ed Connection](https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/) site, including [State SNAP-Ed Programs](https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/state-snap-ed-programs), to identify potential agencies working toward food security in your state. And be sure to check with your state library to learn about other opportunities for collaboration in your area.  And looking locally, brainstorm **potential community partners** you could connect with to understand food security needs and to work with to develop programs and services which provide increased access to healthy foods. Consider both organizations and individuals, including local authors, farmers and gardeners! (See WebJunction’s [Community Partnership and Collaboration Guide](http://www.webjunction.org/documents/webjunction/Community_Partner_Collaboration_Guide.html) for a list of other potential partners for collaboration)  1.  2.  3.  4.  5.  Your partner may bring additional resources, activities or audiences to your offerings, as well as subject-matter expertise, and remember that existing library resources may support *their* goals. | |
| **Action Plan: (include next steps, who, when, etc.)** | |
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