

# Activity 4: Responses To Hunger And Poverty In The U.S.

GRADES 5-12

GSE

GSE Standard Alignment:  
Social Studies/ELA



45 - 75 min.



This activity can be paired with *Food and Life, Who is Food Insecure, Family Budgets and How Access Defines What We Eat.*

## Student Learning

Students will identify and expand their understanding of both community and government responses to hunger, food insecurity, and poverty.

Students will also explore the importance of anti-hunger advocacy.

## Objectives

Students will have a greater understanding and be able to increase awareness about anti-hunger advocacy and community and government responses to hunger and poverty.

Students will be able to identify ways they can respond to hunger and food insecurity in their own communities.

## Materials

- Headbanz Game Pieces
- Study Sheets on Community and Government Responses and Anti-Hunger Advocacy
- Worksheets on Community and Government Responses and Anti-Hunger Advocacy
- Scissors
- Pens/Pencils

## Performance Tasks

### Part One

Distribute Community and Government Responses and Anti-Hunger Advocacy Study Sheets and Worksheets to everyone and have them work in pairs or in small groups.

Have students circle all the responses and terms they know or have heard of before.

Have the students complete the worksheet, discuss if the definitions are similar or different than they expected, and write down any questions, conflicts and opinions they have about each response to hunger and poverty. Have students think about where their different opinions came from: is it from personal experience or something else they have learned or been told?

Have students take 5-10 minutes to review and study all the responses and terms and briefly quiz each other for basic understanding in preparation for Part 2.

### Part Two

Ask students to put their study sheets away. Together or in small groups, place game pieces face down in the center of a

table. Students should choose one game piece **without looking at it** and place it on their forehead in view of the others.

Instruct students that the goal is to figure out what their game piece says by asking yes or no questions to others.

Students have one minute each to ask their questions and guess the answer.

*For Example: Am I community or government response? Do I have certain eligibility criteria? Do I have a well-known acronym/abbreviation? Am I only for expectant parents and kids?*

If after one minute, the student hasn't answered correctly, they must keep that game piece until they guess.

Correct guessers choose a new game piece and the student who guesses the most community and government responses and terms is the winner/expert.

## Discussion Questions

- Now that you have a better understanding of both community and government responses to hunger and food insecurity, what are some ways we can respond and take action?

*Facilitator Note: Individuals and groups can volunteer, donate food and funds, raise awareness, organize an advocacy campaign, etc.*

- Have you ever advocated for anything or anyone before? If so, how?  
*Facilitator Note: This doesn't have to be related to hunger or poverty, it can be speaking up for a friend or working to change a policy at school, etc.*
- Why is anti-hunger advocacy important?

*Facilitator Note: Advocacy is important for many reasons including the fact that the people making decisions and creating laws that impact others are often not aware of the challenges struggling families might face; individuals and families struggling to pay rent or put food on the table often have limited time to speak out.*

- Why is it important that people respond to hunger and poverty issues?  
*Facilitator Note: To end hunger in the United States, there needs to be greater community and political will and that only comes with more voices, greater awareness and bold action.*
- Name 3 reasons hunger and poverty are urgent issues? *Facilitator Note: All three have a devastating impact on community health, child development and our workforce.*

## Extension Ideas

### Create a Resource Guide

Ask students to create a resource guide or pamphlet that would help individuals and families in your area identify resources (food, shelter, financial assistance, clothing, etc).

Information Sources:

- Atlanta Community Food Bank's locator map: <https://www.acfb.org/get-help/>
- United Way Atlanta: [211online.unitedwayatlanta.org/](http://211online.unitedwayatlanta.org/)
- Feeding America's Food Bank Locator: [www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank](http://www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank)
- United Way Worldwide: [www.unitedway.org/our-impact/featured-programs/2-1-1](http://www.unitedway.org/our-impact/featured-programs/2-1-1)

## **Anti-Hunger Advocacy**

- Have students find their federal, state and local elected officials or the elected officials who serve the school community.
- Research if and how these officials have responded to hunger issues in their districts.
- Identify officials to visit the school or speak with the class.
- Visit the Feeding America website [www.feedingamerica.org/take-action/advocate](http://www.feedingamerica.org/take-action/advocate) to learn about current national anti-hunger policy issues.
- Organize a letter writing campaign to advocate for one or all of these Feeding America hunger fighting policy priorities.
- Go to Atlanta Community Food Bank [acfb.org/advocacy](http://acfb.org/advocacy) or contact the Education and Outreach Team at [education@acfb.org](mailto:education@acfb.org) for support and ideas.

## HEADBANZ GAME PIECES

**Food Drive**

**Community  
Gardens**

**Food Pantry**

**Earned Income  
Tax Credit (EITC)**

**Supplemental  
Nutrition Assistance  
Program (SNAP)**

**Child and Adult  
Care Food Program  
(CACFP)**

**Temporary Assistance  
for Needy Families  
(TANF)**

**Mobile Food  
Pantry**

**Special Supplemental  
Nutrition Program for  
Women, Infants and  
Children (WIC)**

**Food Banks**

**School and Summer  
Meals**

**Anti-Hunger  
Advocate**

**Advocacy**

**Community Kitchen**

**Shelter**

**The Emergency Food  
Assistance Program  
(TEFAP)**

# **STUDY SHEET:**

## *Advocacy And Being An Anti-Hunger Advocate*

### **What is Advocacy?**

Advocacy is the act of pleading or arguing in favor of something; one who argues for a cause; an advocate is a supporter; a defender; one who speaks on another's behalf.

### **What is an Anti-Hunger Advocate?**

An anti-hunger advocate is someone who raises awareness about hunger and food insecurity and the people who are impacted by these issues. An anti-hunger advocate also works to support programs and policies that address these issues.

### **Advocacy and Hunger**

Anti-hunger advocates are important in the work of connecting community voices and stories about hunger and food insecurity to elected officials and policy makers. Doing so, will raise awareness of people's lived experiences and what is happening at the community level. This will result in representatives making informed decisions.

### **Ways to Advocate**

There are many ways to be an anti-hunger advocate. Advocates write letters, call or visit policy makers, educate their community on these issues, campaign for candidates they know support policies that promote food security.

### **Who Can Advocate?**

EVERYONE! It is always possible to raise awareness and build the kind of community engagement that leads to action around the issues of hunger and food insecurity. Elected officials love (and need) to hear from their constituents: the people who live, learn, and work in their districts. Students raising their voices have influenced changes in park and recreation services, school nutrition, and neighborhood safety.

If you stand up and speak up, people will listen!

# STUDY SHEET:

## Government Responses to Hunger and Poverty

### What are Government Responses to Hunger and Food Insecurity?

Resources and services provided by the federal and state government to help meet immediate needs with the goal of find long-term solutions for those who are struggling with food insecurity and poverty.

### Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

This program (formerly known as Food Stamps) helps eligible individuals and families purchase food. More than half of people receiving SNAP are children. To be eligible, individuals or households must have incomes at or below 130% of the federal poverty line and meet other strict criteria. SNAP can **not** be used to buy essential non-food items (like diapers or soap).

### Women, Infants & Children (WIC)

This program provides eligible pregnant people, new parents, infants, and young children up to the age of 5 with increased access to nutritious foods, nutrition education, health care, and social service providers in order to prevent nutrition-related health problems in pregnancy, infancy, and early childhood.

### School and Summer Meals

The School Breakfast Program (SBP), National School Lunch Program (NSLP), and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) assist eligible students in order to improve their nutrition. These meals are available during the school year as well as during the summer months at a free or reduced price.

### Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

Provides food and other resources to assist children and adults participating in afterschool, emergency shelter, adult daycare and preschool programs.

### The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

Provides USDA commodities (foods that the government pays farmers to grow) to states that distribute the food through local emergency food providers like food banks.

*Additional information about all of the above Federal Nutrition Programs can be found at:*

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/programs>

### Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Temporarily provides minimal financial assistance to eligible families in need. There is a limited amount of time that a family can receive assistance. Georgia citizens are limited to four years of assistance in a lifetime. The maximum monthly benefit for a family of three is between \$262 and \$289.

*Additional information about TANF can be found here: <https://dfcs.georgia.gov/tanf-eligibility-requirements>*

### Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

A tax credit for low-income working individuals and families. To qualify, taxpayers must earn income from working and meet other requirements. They have the opportunity for a refund of taxes paid if they file a tax return and the credit is more than taxes owed.

*Additional information on the EITC can be found at: <https://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions-for-individuals/earned-income-tax-credit>*

# STUDY SHEET:

## *Community Responses to Hunger and Poverty*

### **What are Community Responses to Hunger?**

These are resources and services provided by individuals and non-governmental groups (like you) and organizations within a community. Some examples include:

#### **Food Bank**

A non-governmental, non-profit charitable organization that procures, stores and distributes food and other resources to community based organizations providing food assistance to individuals and families within a designated region. To learn more about food banks: [acfb.org](http://acfb.org) or [feedingamerica.org](http://feedingamerica.org)

#### **Food Pantry**

A community-based food assistance program distributes food to individuals and families at no cost. Every community is different so there are many different kinds of food pantries. Some are in places of worship, some are in schools, community centers, etc. Pantries often acquire a substantial portion of their food supply from food banks.

#### **Mobile Food Pantry**

A pop-up distribution of food, usually in collaboration with an organization or event, that allows for the distribution of a large amount of food to a large number of individuals and families during a specific period of time.

#### **Shelter**

A community based program that temporarily houses people experiencing homelessness; meals are almost always served. Some shelters serve families and other individuals. Some shelters have the capacity to allow people to stay for extended periods of time and others can only serve people on a first come first serve nightly basis.

#### **Community Kitchen**

Used to be referred to as a soup kitchen, this is a community based food assistance program that serves meals at no cost to people struggling with food insecurity. Every community is different so there are many types of community kitchens. Some community kitchen programs operate out of places of worship and some are connected to organizations providing shelter or day care for children or adults.

#### **Food Drive**

An individual, group or community - wide food collection and donation effort. These are often done to help ensure that a community based service provider (food bank, food pantry, etc. ) has enough food to feed the community. To learn more about food drives at the Atlanta Community Food Bank:

<https://give.acfb.org/campaign/food-and-fund-drives-2025/c497336>

#### **Community Garden**

Gardens started and tended collectively by a community of individuals and families. Every community garden is unique and reflects the community and people who are part of it. Community gardens can increase both access to fresh vegetables and a sense of community collaboration. Some people grow vegetables and donate to charitable organizations like food pantries.

# WORKSHEET ON ANTI-HUNGER ADVOCACY

Complete the sections below.

Similarities/Differences to What You Know

Definition

Examples

Questions



# WORKSHEET ON GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

Complete the sections below.

Myths

Definition

Examples

Importance

# WORKSHEET ON COMMUNITY RESPONSES

Complete the sections below.

Myths

Definition

Examples

Importance