



A Case Study on Advocacy to Reduce Food Insecurity in County America using Cooperative Extension Service

County America Development increases Hunger for some People

- County America is the fastest growing county in a Western State. In 2005, population was 500,000, a 50% change from the 1990 U.S. Census.
- Some of the population increase is in response to more jobs in retail, restaurant, hotel and other services due to recreational industry. These jobs are often low-paying, service-oriented jobs.
- The increase in service jobs has resulted in a changing ethnic composition of the community with a 10 % increase in people of Hispanic or Latino origin and primarily Spanish speaking families moving to County A and this trend is expected to continue.
- The high growth rate and an increasing urbanization of the County have led to higher prices in housing and land while a need for lower cost housing continues to exist.
- Land previously devoted to farming and agriculture has been developed for housing and the recreational industry negatively impacting affordable housing markets as well as a once thriving agricultural industry of fruit and vegetable production.

Some People turn to Emergency Food Agencies and the Food Stamp Program for Assistance

- In 2006, local emergency food agencies reported an increase need for emergency food and over 4,000 households in Country A receive food stamps, an indicator of food insecurity.
- Some of the people in need of food assistance face barriers, such as language, transportation, and food access and County A food agencies are challenged by agency staff turnover and limited resources such that these barriers are difficult to overcome.
- In addition, County A lacks a coordinated approach from farm to table and agricultural policy has not kept up with the changing land use and migration of Hispanics to the area, resulting in further strain to the entire food system.

Country A calls upon University X Cooperative Extension to help address issue of Food Insecurity

- County A recognizes the value of University X Cooperative Extension Service with regards to working with issues of food security, nutrition education and community food systems and asks for their help.
- University X Cooperative Extension immediately recognizes the need to establish a County A Food policy Council to bring together food system services and establish a network of existing community resources. They also realize the importance of conducting an assessment of the food system in place to decide on the type of activities needed and how to proceed with subsequent activities and the need to develop a comprehensive plan to address food security.
- But before University X Cooperative Extension can move forward, it needs your help and guidance per the discussion questions below. Your answer will help shape the action taken to help address food security in County A.

Questions for discussion:

1. Who should Cooperative Extension seek to actively participate and be partners in this process at the local, state and federal level? Who are most likely to influence food security in County A communities?
2. Identify 2-3 potential goals and objectives to make this process happen within the next two-three years. For example, Goal 1, Year 1 could be to establish a Food Policy Council in Country A with an objective to include broad participation of individuals and agencies to meet the nutritional needs of this County.
3. Discuss potential challenges that Cooperative Extension may face by in coming up with an actionable plan based on the Goals and Objectives identified in #2. How might these challenges be avoided?
4. Discuss how you would ensure the sustainability of this project through grassroots efforts with the local populace and perhaps influence change at the state or federal level.