

ADVOCACY AGENDA

Vision

We believe the fight against hunger and the fight against poverty are one and the same. We envision a future in which food is recognized as a human right and every person is able to feed themselves and their families in dignity. Together, we work to create a more nourished, prosperous region.

Guiding principles

Foodlink recognizes that to eliminate hunger, our community must eliminate poverty. We recognize that access to nutritious food is about more than geographic proximity and affordability. We recognize that systemic inequities like racism and classism are embedded in our current food system; these forces determine who gets a seat at the table and who experiences the most food insecurity.

Foodlink pursues a continuum of activities to address food insecurity and poverty including direct food relief, healthy food access, nutrition education and workforce development. We will also use our voice and network to advocate for relevant legislation that supports the needs of the communities we serve. We will leverage our resources as a food bank and community leader to work collaboratively with movements, organizations, and policymakers to end poverty in our region.

The pursuit of equity guides our work, and we will center community members impacted by food insecurity in everything we do. We recognize that programs, policies, and services are better when the beneficiaries have a stake in creating and maintaining them. Our goal is to cultivate the capacity of people to participate in and lead decision-making processes that meet their needs and maximize the health of our communities.

Areas of focus

- 1 Ensure no one goes hungry.** Foodlink will take the lead in convening an effective, inclusive, emergency food network throughout our 10-county service area. We will maximize every available resource to ensure that we have a robust network of partners that can meet the food and nutritional needs of the diverse communities we serve.
- 2 Increase access to healthy food in under-resourced communities.** Foodlink will operate programs and foster partnerships with community-based organizations to increase access to food retail, empower people with the tools to eat a nutritious diet, and connect people to programs that can help maximize their food budget.
- 3 Eliminate the root causes of hunger**
We acknowledge that most individuals utilizing Foodlink's programs are facing challenges in other vital areas such as housing, medical care, and underemployment. We will leverage our organizational strength to support these individuals by administering strong workforce development programs, participating in critical advocacy work beyond food justice, and committing to hiring individuals who experienced barriers to employment.

Our Priorities

Foodlink will:

1 Ensure no one goes hungry

- Leverage our membership network to develop a strong regional anti-hunger advocacy voice.
- Advocate for strong anti-hunger and anti-poverty programs in the New York State budget, with a focus on full funding for the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) and Nourish New York.
- Advocate for a robust, well-funded and inclusive federal anti-hunger safety net with expanded eligibility criteria for participation, including but not limited to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP).

2 Increase access to healthy food in under-resourced communities

- Lead the region in administering food access programs. To increase the effectiveness of these programs, we will center the voice of the community members we serve and strengthen referral mechanisms with healthcare providers, schools and community-based organizations.
- Advocate for strong nutrition incentive programs that expand household food budgets and values-based procurement policies that improve food quality at public institutions.
- Serve as a leader and administrator on the resident-led Rochester Food Policy Council, which fosters the creation of policy recommendations to strengthen the local food system.

3 Eliminate the root causes of hunger

- Administer effective workforce development initiatives to connect people with careers in the food industry, ensuring that all graduates have access to livable wage jobs with benefits and opportunities for growth.
- Advocate for and support the creation of additional workforce development initiatives in the region that provide full-time hours with livable wages, benefits and worker protections.
- Support the organizations addressing the financial barrier of “benefit cliffs” that often prevent individuals from seeking higher-paying jobs due to the risk of losing critical support.
- Advocate for the growth of benefits access work that breaks down systemic barriers for eligible individuals and families to participate in safety net programs.

