



Population Health Trust March Newsletter

Community Advisory Board to the Skagit County Board of Health

March 2023

Access to adequate and appropriate food is vital to well-being. More than just physical sustenance, food nourishes us socially and emotionally. While some take the abundance of food for granted, for many Skagitonians, securing their daily food needs is a challenge.

The USDA defines food insecurity as “limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods.” Food insecurity was identified as an area of concern in the [2020-2021 Community Health Assessment](#). Given the link between food insecurity and risk for chronic disease, it became a priority area in the [2022 COVID Recovery Plan](#).

FOOD
SECURITY
(FS)

A white silhouette of an apple with a single leaf, positioned to the right of the 'FOOD SECURITY (FS)' header.

GOALS

- 1** All Skagit County residents, especially those experiencing poverty or access challenges - children, seniors, indigenous populations, and those with disabilities - have access to enough nutritious food every day.
- 2** Skagit County has a resilient local food economy that makes affordable, healthy, sustainable, and culturally appropriate food the norm for everyone.

STRATEGIES

FS1 Advocate for community-based programs that ensure culturally relevant and nutritious foods are available and affordable for all Skagit residents, especially for families with children and other vulnerable populations.

FS2 Support a thorough assets and gaps analysis to understand food security vulnerabilities and to create a collaborative vision for collective action and policy development.

In 2020, 11% of Skagit residents, or 14,020 people, experienced food insecurity ([Feeding America](#)). 61% of kids in our county were eligible for free or reduced lunch in 2021/2022 ([Skagit Trends](#)).

Rates of food insecurity are higher among certain populations including children, seniors, indigenous populations, and individuals with disabilities.

The PHT recently launched a Food Security Workgroup to address this important issue. Like the process utilized for both the Opioid Workgroup Leadership Team (OWLT) and the First 1,000 days, the Food Security Workgroup will engage community stakeholders in a months-long process designed to better understand and develop strategies to address this complex issue. The process will include a review of available data, an assets and gaps analysis, development of strategies to increase access to food, and the establishment of a Food Policy Council. The establishment of a Food Policy Council is considered a best practice in addressing food security according to [Thriving Together: A Springboard for Equitable Recovery & Resilience in Communities Across America](#). We hope this group will continue working to increase food access in Skagit County into the future.

While the issue is complex, the need is urgent for many. The challenge of the work will be to balance the desire for sustainable, systems-level changes with more immediate actions to address current challenges. We look forward to providing additional updates in future newsletters.

Thank you for your partnership in keeping Skagit County healthy!



The Population Health Trust was founded in 2015 and is the Community Advisory Board to the Skagit County Board of Health. For more information, check out our [website](#).

Population Health Trust

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