



HHWEEK.ORG

Campus Organizing Toolkit

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week is co-sponsored by the National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness and the National Coalition for the Homeless.

Find us online at HHWeek.org

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The National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness is committed to ending hunger and homelessness by educating, engaging, and training students to directly meet individuals' immediate needs while advocating for long-term systemic solutions.

The National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness is a project of the Student PIRGs.

www.StudentsAgainstHunger.org



The National Coalition for the Homeless is a national network of people who are currently experiencing or who have experienced homelessness, activists and advocates, community-based and faith-based service providers, and others committed to a single mission: To prevent and end homelessness while ensuring the immediate needs of those experiencing homelessness are met and their civil rights protected.

www.NationalHomeless.org

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HUNGER & HOMELESSNESS

NO ONE SHOULD HAVE TO WORRY about whether they will have food on their plate or a roof over their head. But the reality is that hunger and homelessness are widespread problems that affect far too many people.

IN THE U.S.

Many Americans are living on the edge, forced to choose between basic necessities like purchasing food, paying rent, or going to the doctor.

- In 2020, there were 37.2 million people in poverty, approximately 3.3 million more than in 2019¹.
- More than 44 million Americans are dependent on food stamps.²

- In January 2020, over half a million people experiencing homelessness in the United States.³
- In the 2016-17 school year, 1.4 million students (ages 6 to 18) experienced homelessness.⁴



More than **37 million Americans** are at risk of suffering from hunger.



Nearly **1 in 6 children** lives in poverty.

1. <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2021/income-poverty-health-insurance-coverage.html>
2. <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/snap-eligibility-access.html>
3. <https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/homelessness-statistics/state-of-homelessness-2021/>
4. <https://www.childtrends.org/indicators/homeless-children-and-youth>

SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE COVID-19 CRISIS IN MARCH 2020⁵

- 98 percent of food banks reported an increase in demand for food assistance.
- 59 percent of food banks reported having less inventory.
- 95 percent of food banks reported higher operational expenses, and 37 percent reported an immediate critical funding shortfall.
- 67 percent of food banks are accepting and are in need of volunteers.

ON CAMPUS

Poverty isn't exclusive to any one community. Even college campuses are not immune. Student food insecurity is a growing concern on campuses.

- A recent federal Government Accountability Office report found that estimates of food insecurity among college students ranged from **9 percent to over 50 percent**.⁶
- The 2019 #RealCollege National Survey report surveyed over 86,000 students and found that:
 - **45%** of respondents **were food insecure** in the prior 30 days.
 - **56%** of respondents were **housing insecure** in the previous year
 - **17%** of respondents **were homeless** in the previous year.⁷
- Around the country, colleges and universities are opening food pantries to help ease student hunger. The College and University Food Bank Alliance's ever-expanding member list now includes nearly **700 campus food pantries**—often working with their local communities—in an effort to combat food insecurity.⁸

5. <https://www.feedingamerica.org/about-us/press-room/soaring-demand-plummeting-supply>

6. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/696254.pdf>

7. https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/HOPE_realcollege_National_report_digital.pdf

8. <https://universitybusiness.com/food-pantries-work-to-end-campus-hunger/>

WORLDWIDE

At the global level, the problem is even more serious. While there has been slow but steady progress over the past thirty years, there are still a tremendous number of people who live in extreme poverty.

- **795 million people** – or one in nine people in the world – do not have enough to eat. Of those, 60% are women.⁸
- 767 million people in developing countries live below the international poverty line of **\$1.90** per person per day.⁹
- The Syrian refugee crisis has rapidly developed into the largest humanitarian disaster of the 21st century. More than **11 million Syrians** have been displaced from their homes and many are now living in abject poverty.¹⁰

ENDING HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS

Given the scale of these problems, we must come together as a society to make sure everyone has access to food and shelter.

Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week is an opportunity to tackle these issues on your campus. The Awareness Week is a way to:

- **Educate** the student body and your community about these issues and build support for solutions;
- Perform **community service** that helps those in need; and
- **Raise money and donations** to support local agencies that are on the front line in addressing hunger and homelessness.

WORLDWIDE



795 million people—or **1 in 9** people in the world—do not have enough to eat.

767 million people live on \$1.90 a day or less.



Every **10 seconds, a child dies** of a hunger-related disease.

9. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4646e.pdf>

10. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/poverty-and-shared-prosperity>

11. <https://www.mercycorps.org/articles/iraq-jordan-lebanon-syria-turkey/quick-facts-what-you-need-know-about-syria-crisis>

HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS AWARENESS WEEK

As the holidays approach, people take time to consider what they're thankful for and many choose to donate some of their time, attention, and resources to others. In that spirit of giving, each year the National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness sponsor Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week during the week prior to Thanksgiving.

Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week is designed to educate your community, draw attention to the problems of poverty, and build up the base of volunteers and supporters for local anti-poverty agencies. Your group will spend this week generating publicity about hunger and homelessness and holding a series of events to engage the campus community.

Communities across the country are facing additional challenges due to the global pandemic and more extreme weather events. We strongly recommend that you hold virtual events and that all in-person events are outside and attendees are vaccinated, masked, and socially distanced. In this toolkit, we've included examples of events and best practices that will help ensure that your crucial organizing work will continue to make real change.

This amazing event was first held at Villanova University in 1975. This year, more than 750 colleges, high schools, and community groups across the country will come together during this week to raise awareness about the pressing issues of hunger and homelessness.

» Please take a moment now to register your Awareness Week at HHWeek.org.

Registering your event helps us show that there's a national movement of students doing what it takes to eliminate poverty in their communities and helps to maximize your impact. It also lets our organizing team keep in touch with you to provide helpful resources and updates.

PRIORITY EVENT

FUNDRAISER

Here are a few tips on organizing a fundraiser

- You should prioritize fundraising for one or more local shelters or food banks during your week-long drive. Make sure to talk with local service providers in advance to make sure they need and are accepting donations.
- You can also make your drive really visible and exciting by finding a way to showcase the amount of money being raised. For example, ask your campus to display a digital thermometer on the campus website during the week to motivate students to continue to fundraise and get more people involved.
- One way to make your drive really big is to turn it into a contest. Have student organizations or dorms compete to see who can collect the most donations. Get local businesses to donate prizes for the winners or to commit to matching donations.

ORGANIZING YOUR AWARENESS WEEK

» START EARLY

Early planning is important. Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week will arrive before you know it. The earlier you start brainstorming, planning, and organizing, the bigger and better your week will go. Starting early also makes it easier to recruit partners, book speakers and raise money for supplies.

As you make your plan, here are some of the questions that you will need to answer:

- How many events do you want to hold during the week? Which events?
- When and where should each event take place?
- How many volunteers will you need in order to coordinate each event?
- What campus and community groups should you ask to partner on each event?
- What are creative ways to publicize the week and raise awareness?
- What are the most urgent needs you might be able to meet through service or fundraising events for local people experiencing hunger or homelessness?

» PLANNING YOUR EVENTS

One of your most important tasks is deciding what events you want to hold during your Awareness Week and when

HELP AND RESOURCES

Need advice on how to execute your Awareness Week events? Our organizing staff can help you plan your week and troubleshoot problems. We also have lots of useful event materials and resources available. Learn more at:

» HHWEEK.ORG

to schedule each one. Your ideal week should have a mix of events and there are lots of ways to incorporate different types of events.

We encourage groups to include at least one of each of the following event types:

- Educational events like a discussion or a movie screening
- Fundraising events like phone-a-thons
- Advocacy events like lobby meetings or a petition drive.

Give some thought to how many events you can realistically hold during the week. Some schools will hold events every day while others will not. Decide as a group what you can accomplish based on your people and resources. If you think you're stretched too thin, focus on quality over quantity.

» FLOW OF THE WEEK

As you plan out your week, here are some tips on when to schedule each piece.

Your publicity should happen throughout the week, but it's particularly important that you make a big splash at the beginning of the week so that students know that Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week is taking place. Since students aren't on campus full time, digital publicity will be key.

Some examples of visibility include:

- Professors and Department Heads sending out listserv announcements to students about the week's events;
- Making sure events are included on campus calendars and newsletters;
- Social Media posts from University accounts and student groups;
- Banner announcements on the campus website or homework platforms.

You should generally start with smaller events and build up to your biggest events. This gives people time to hear about the week and the issues so that they're ready to participate when the bigger events come along.

However, you may want to hold one big event at the beginning of the week in order to generate attention and excitement to kick things off.

It's still usually best to schedule events for late in the afternoon or in the evening to increase the likelihood that students will attend.

» BUILD YOUR TEAM

To organize a great Awareness Week, there's a lot of work to be done: publicizing events, contacting the media, finding and preparing speakers, coordinating with local agencies, recruiting students to attend, creating materials, etc. To manage all of these tasks, you should establish a planning committee of student volunteers who will steer your Awareness Week.

Your top volunteers should take on leadership roles and manage different pieces of the planning process.

Here are some important roles to fill:

- **Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week Coordinator** – This person is in charge of the whole week, chairs the overall planning meetings, and works closely with the other leaders.
- **Publicity Coordinator** - This person is responsible for implementing the visibility plan for the week, including designing materials such as website content, social media images, etc. and making sure the content is displayed on digital platforms.
- **Media Coordinator** – This person is in charge of contacting reporters and editors at local media outlets to pitch them on covering the week's events.
- **Coalition Coordinator** – This person is in charge of recruiting other organizations and people to partner on events, then working closely with them to make the most of their participation.
- **Event Coordinators** – Each big event during the week should have a person who is in charge of that event's success and will coordinate the other volunteers who are helping with logistics, recruitment, etc.

»»SEEK OUT PARTNERS

One great thing about Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week is that it provides an opportunity to work with lots of different organizations and people on campus. You should look for ways to work with as many partners as possible, as a way to make your Awareness Week as big as possible. Recruiting partners to digital events is vital to make sure your events are successful as partners bring their membership to events and provide visibility.

Here are some ideas for groups to approach:

- **Service Organizations** – These are natural partners for the community service and fundraising events in your week.
- **Campus Ministry/Religious Groups** – Religious groups frequently look for community service projects to join around the holidays. You can also ask these groups to make hunger and homelessness the theme of their weekly service.
- **Fraternities and Sororities** – You can work with the Greek philanthropy chairs to adopt the week as one of their service events. Greeks are competitive, so organize a contest to see which house can raise the most money or food or turn out the most volunteers.
- **Student Government** – Ask them to pass a resolution in support of the week, supply funding for your events, or help with publicity. Invite the president and other leaders to speak at your webinar events, talk to the media, or make a team for your virtual fundraiser.
- **Residence Halls** – If your campus is still providing on campus housing the RAs can help recruit residents to volunteer, or run a fundraising contest between dorms. They can also email their residents advertising your week of action.
- **Affinity Groups** – Many affinity groups have community service committees that would be excited to participate in the week's events. In addition to asking them to join your events, encourage them to help come up with their own digital event ideas or educational programs specific to their communities.
- **Sports Teams** – Teams have big fan bases so they can be great at generating publicity. If you can get a team to sponsor an hour of the virtual fundraiser that can be a great way to get attention and media coverage.
- **Faculty** – Ask supportive faculty members to promote the week by making announcements in their zoom classes about events, offering extra credit for participation, or attending events themselves as speakers.

» PUBLICIZE YOUR WEEK

Publicity is critical to the success of your week – it’s the biggest way that you raise awareness. Visibility will also help you recruit more people to come to your events and donate to your fundraisers.

When it comes to visibility: think big! You will want to think creatively about how and where students are getting information about campus events and make sure you have a presence there.

Here are a few tips:

- **Use a wide variety of tactics** – posters, banners, flyers, chalking, social media posts, email, websites, announcements at classes and group meetings, etc.

- **Your volunteers are the best ambassadors for your message.** Have them post Awareness Week content on their social media accounts and ask their friends to do the same.
- **Get creative!** Think outside the box—every community is different and there might be a social media platform that is used more on your campus. Ask your volunteers about the best places to get noticed.
- **Utilize your partners.** You can reach a ton of people by getting other groups to email their members, make announcements at their meetings, and post content on social media.

OSU Center for Civic Engagement



A poster from Oregon State University.

» GET MEDIA ATTENTION

Media coverage is a powerful tool for raising awareness about hunger and homelessness – it lets you reach more people than you could ever contact through other means. You should notify campus and community media outlets about your Awareness Week events and ask them to cover them.

Start by making a list of the media outlets in your community, including your campus newspaper, campus TV and radio stations, local newspaper, local TV and radio stations, and local blogs. Look up the contact info for the news editors at each outlet.

Two weeks before your Awareness Week, call each outlet to pitch them on covering your week and the issues of hunger and

homelessness. Encourage them to use the Awareness Week as an opportunity to do some in-depth coverage on local poverty and how COVID-19 has impacted the community. Also pitch them on the individual events taking place during your week.

As you get closer to the week, go back and re-pitch each outlet on the individual events taking place during Awareness Week. Pick one or two events that you think are the most newsworthy and put the most energy into pitching those events.

Here are some additional tips:

- **Ask the campus paper** to dedicate a full page or section during the week to the issues of hunger and homelessness.
- **Ask campus radio and TV** stations to run public service announcements about the week.

- **Create good photo opportunities**

All in-person events should have large visual displays to attract media attention. If your event is virtual, have the speakers use virtual backgrounds or hold up signs that advertise the Hunger and Homelessness Awareness week logo and make sure all participants have their cameras on to get good screenshots.

- **Have volunteers submit letters** to the editor to the local newspaper about the problems of hunger and homelessness and what students are doing about them.

The Awareness Week can be a great chance to get positive coverage for the campus. Ask the university's media relations staff if they will help reach out to local media outlets.

CAMPUS SPOTLIGHT UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

OSPIRG's (Oregon Students Public Interest Research Group) Hunger and Homelessness campaign hosted Ducks Donate Stream-A-Thon on March 15th to support Food for Lane County. They partnered with the Oregon Kappa Kappa Gamma- Beta Omega Chapter, Pi Kappa Phi - Oregon, Sigma Alpha Mu for a 12 hour live stream that fundraised over \$1,000, providing families with 3,000 meals.



10 EVENT IDEAS FOR THIS YEAR'S WEEK

FUNDRAISERS

1 BENEFIT CONCERT

Host a concert with local bands or artists and to donate the ticket sales to charity. Make sure to recruit bands that are popular on campus and already have a following, since this will make recruitment for the concert much easier.

2 PHONE-A-THON

Host a phone-a-thon where students and campus community members can call family and friends and ask them to donate.

3 EMAIL FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

Have students, faculty, administrators and the campus community email their family and friends asking them to donate to the fundraiser.

4 FUN RUN/WALK

Organize a 5K fun run, walk, or bike ride. Set a registration fee or ask participants to collect a mini- mum amount in donations from sponsors. Have participants post on social media throughout the day to highlight their run!



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

To get more detailed instructions and tips on how to organize each of these events, visit our website at HHWeek.org.

EDUCATION EVENTS

5 FACES OF HOMELESSNESS

Host a panel discussion where current or formerly homeless individuals speak about their experiences and answer questions from the audience. This is a powerful way to create a dialogue between people who have experienced homelessness and students who are interested in the issue. Contact the Speakers' Bureau at the National Coalition for the Homeless, which can help you find panelists:

nationalhomeless.org/about-us/projects/faces/

5 LOCAL NEEDS PANEL

Host a panel discussion of local elected officials and professionals who work at the local service providers to talk about the problems in the local community. This is a powerful way for students to learn about their campus community and ways to continue to be involved.

6 FOOD INSECURITY ON CAMPUS

Host a panel discussion of campus administrators, professors, and on campus service providers to talk about the on food insecurity among students and what the university is doing to address it. This is a great way for students to get educated on student food insecurity and also learn about the resources available to them on campus.

ISSUE ADVOCACY

Does your organization have a particular piece of legislation regarding hunger or homelessness issues that you support?

7 HOST A PETITION DRIVE

Hold a petitioning event at a local college campus, in a town center, or outside a grocery store to collect signatures. Or have volunteers collect signatures from their friends and family.

8 HOST A PHONEBANK

Students can call into legislative offices vocalizing their support of an issue. They can then call their friends and family to make calls as well.

9 HOST A LETTER WRITING PARTY

Host a letter-to-the-editor writing party. Students can write into their local hometown papers to express their support of the legislation.

10 TOWN HALL MEETING

Host a community discussion about hunger and homelessness in order to draw attention to the issue and build support for solutions. Invite as many local stakeholders as possible, including elected officials, city and county staff, advocates from social service organizations, church leaders, and (very important) local residents who are hungry or homeless.

DECRIMINALIZING HOMELESSNESS

Many major cities have laws that essentially criminalize homelessness by making it illegal for the homeless to sit, stand, sleep, or eat in public spaces. Recently, many cities have passed new laws that also make it illegal to provide aid for those in need, by imposing fines and even jail time for distributing food to hungry individuals on the street.

If your city has passed food-sharing bans or similar laws that penalize the homeless and organizations that serve the homeless, then you can organize students to speak out against these policies.

Collect petition signatures , generate phone calls, or take other actions to urge your city's mayor and city council to decriminalize homelessness. Learn more at: nationalhomeless.org/issues/civil-rights



PROMOTE HHWEEK ON YOUR CAMPUS
Visit HHWeek.org for downloadable materials.



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