

Improving the Health of Our Communities: Food Security



Catholic healthcare is addressing hunger and improving food security in communities.

Catholic Healthcare in Action

Catholic healthcare recognizes that regular access to nutritious food is essential for health and well-being. Rooted in its commitment to care for the whole person, Catholic healthcare understands that health is shaped not only by medical care but also by everyday conditions, including reliable access to healthy food.

Across the country, Catholic healthcare is addressing food security through partnerships, innovative programs, and direct service. Efforts include hospital on-site food pantries, community food lockers and distribution points that extend reach beyond hospital walls, collaborations with food banks and faith communities, and initiatives that redirect surplus food to those in need.

This work reflects Catholic healthcare's mission to address social factors that influence health, advance human dignity and promote the common good.

Why This Matters

Food insecurity is linked to poorer health outcomes, including higher rates of chronic disease, delayed recovery and increased hospitalization. Children, older adults, low-income individuals, and those with serious illness are especially vulnerable.

Healthcare organizations are increasingly serving as key access points for identifying and addressing food insecurity. By connecting patients and families with community food resources, Catholic healthcare bridges the gap between clinical care and the everyday needs that affect health.

By the Numbers: A National Snapshot on Food Security

- More than 1 in every 8 U.S. households (13.7%) experiences food insecurity in 2024 ([USDA](#), 2026).
- 1 in 5 children in the U.S. lives in a food-insecure household ([Feeding America](#), 2026).
- Food prices remained significantly higher (over 20% higher) in late 2023 compared to early 2020 ([CBPP](#), 2024).
- In 2020, Black households were over 2 times more likely to be food insecure than the national average ([OASH](#)).

Stories of Impact

Articles from Catholic Health World featuring community health programs from across the ministry



[Trinity Health prioritizes nutrition, using clinical and social care strategies to promote food security](#)

Understanding access to healthy food is a core driver of outcomes, this program integrates nutrition into clinical care and social support strategies to address food insecurity as a health issue (2026).



[New Hampshire hospital partners with church to open preventative food pantry](#)

Addressing food insecurity as a key driver of poor health outcomes in the community This collaboration connects patients and families access nutritious food before health issues worsen (2024).



[CHRISTUS hospital joins with nonprofit to offer remote food locker for people in need](#)

Removing barriers to nutrition, the remote food locker provides discreet, 24/7 access to groceries for people in need. (2024).



[CommonSpirit hospitals send cafeterias' surplus to community](#)

Redirecting surplus cafeteria food to community organizations turns unused meals into a consistent source of nutrition support for people facing food insecurity (2024).



[Family Nourishment Room gives NICU families one less reason to worry](#)

A Family Nourishment Room in the NICU gives parents easy access to food and essentials so they can stay close to their hospitalized newborns. The program reduces stress and removes small but meaningful barriers for families during a critical time (2024).

September 2026

A Mission to Care + A Commitment to the Community

From their beginning and continuing today, Catholic and other nonprofit health care organizations are responding to the unique needs of their communities, working to improve health and well-being for all. They do this through their primary charitable purpose of providing health care, community benefit, and other activities and investments in health.

Learn more at chausa.org/communitybenefit

