

Food Security

COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS THEORY OF CHANGE

Commitment to Health Equity

Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc. believes that to improve the wellness of the least served and fully live out its mission of "Serving Humanity to Honor God," it must recognize the inequities inherent in its communities that contribute to poor health outcomes. **Health Equity is both the process and goal by which Methodist Healthcare Ministries seeks to carry out that purpose.** Health Equity is a framework of thought and action that strives to reduce racial and socio-economic disparities and create fair and just opportunities for every person to reach their full potential.

Current State

- 13% of Texas households — 1 in 8 Texans — experience food insecurity
 - 14.8% of residents in MHM's 74-County Region experience food insecurity
- Approximately 14% of Bexar County residents are food insecure, and the child food insecurity rate is even higher, affecting 1 in 5 children in Bexar County
- Texas is one of just 9 states with higher food insecurity than the national average
- Texas had an estimated 75.9% of the population with limited supermarket proximity in 2019, compared to the national average of 74.7%
 - 40.5% of residents in MHM's 74-County Region live more than 1 mile away from a grocery store



Desired Future State

All people in MHM's service area have consistent access to sufficient food for a healthy life and to optimize long-term health

Vision

To be the leader for improving wellness of the least served



Objective 1

Increase access to food resources to achieve desired future state

PRIORITY

- Screen for SNAP / WIC enrollment
- Support food distribution in MHM service area
- Increase access for SNAP benefits

Objective 2

Improve access to healthy and affordable foods in the local community to achieve desired future state

PRIORITY

- Reduce distance to food
- Increase resident proximity and involvement in food production
- Provide healthy food initiatives in schools

Objective 3

Increase food distribution capacity to achieve desired future state

PRIORITY

- Increase local food production
- Increase facility capacity
- Innovative food production

*MHM investments prioritize efforts serving economically disadvantaged, geographically underserved, and historically disenfranchised populations

OBJECTIVE 1: Increase Access to Food Resources to Achieve Desired Future State

Increase number of individuals in MHM service receiving adequate nutrition

Priority	Screen for SNAP / WIC enrollment Efforts should improve benefit utilization rates and increase awareness
Priority	Support food distribution efforts in MHM service area Support food banks, pantries that provide supportive services or social determinants of health screening
Priority	Increase access for SNAP benefits Increase range of payment options available for SNAP benefits, Double Up Food Bucks Programs
Metrics	Clients enrolled and served, pounds of food distributed, household food insecurity reduction, number of SNAP transactions

OBJECTIVE 2: Improve Access to Healthy and Affordable Food in the Community to Achieve Desired Future State

Reduce barriers to obtaining healthy and affordable food

Priority	Reduce distance to food Including local healthy food stores, food pantries co-located with health clinics, mobile markets
Priority	Increasing resident proximity to and involvement in food production Initiatives focused developing community land trusts or other alternative land ownership models for community gardens and urban farms
Priority	Provide healthy food initiatives in schools Efforts focused on nutrition education, school based backpack style programs
Metrics	Improved resident proximity and/or access to food sources, nutritional components of programs, and food cost reductions

OBJECTIVE 3: Increase Food Distribution Capacity to Achieve Desired Future State

Increase amount of food produced and distributed in service area.

Priority	Increase local food production Production efforts such as equitable farming practices with local focus, small scale farming, urban agriculture, farm management software
Priority	Increase facility capacity Support safe and adequate food storage such as truck and freezer capabilities
Priority	Innovative food production Community education, regenerative agriculture, hydroponics, aeroponics, water management technology
Metrics	Increase in food supply, reduced transportation costs, or efficiency improvements

