



In Preparation - Assemble an Advisory Panel

The prioritization process is managed by an advisory panel, organized around the shared goal of identifying food security solutions. The prioritization process is a participatory process; broad engagement is key. Including diverse stakeholders on the panel empowers the community and generates a long-term commitment to success. There is no better resource for the prioritization process than the collective knowledge and experience of this panel.

Potential Stakeholder Groups	Media	Funders/Partners
Business/Industry - Banks/micro financiers - Grocers/corner stores - Restaurants - Local food manufacturers - Chamber of Commerce	Local/regional media outlets	- Foundations/philanthropies - Donors - Non-profit/non-governmental organizations - Economic and social development experts - Interest groups (e.g., women's cooperatives, professional associations, nutrition organizations)
Built Environment - Community/urban planners - Transportation officials - Public health officials - Local WIC/SNAP offices - Parks and recreation departments	Education/Social - Colleges and universities/cooperative extensions - K-12 teachers and administrators - Early childhood educators and administrators - After-school programs - School boards - Social workers/social support groups	Policy - Policymakers - Local mayor and city council - Local government offices/other elected officials - Military/veterans organizations
Community Stakeholders - Individuals who have experienced food insecurity - Indigenous leaders - Religious leaders - Community leaders from under-represented populations in your local setting	Food Security - Food pantries/banks - Food reclamation experts	
	Food System - Farmers - Agricultural specialists - Food packaging - Food transportation/delivery - Food waste reduction	Health Care - Local/regional hospitals and health systems - Health care private practices (e.g. MDs, RDNs) - Insurance providers

This panel should include individuals, organizations or specific groups with an understanding of the local socioeconomic, health, cultural and political context. The recommended number of people on the advisory panel is five to fifteen. If more are needed, create smaller working



groups to report to the advisory panel. Consider including recipients of the community’s food security services, as their lived experiences can be invaluable. Organizations that directly provide food security services may be able to recommend individuals that would be interested in participating.

To assist identifying appropriate groups, consider these questions:

- Interest: Is the stakeholder invested in the community?
- Interest: Is the stakeholder interested in ensuring food and nutrition security for the community?
- Interest: Has the stakeholder participated in similar opportunities (funding decisions) in the past?
- Influence/Authority: Has the stakeholder made public commitments to ending hunger in the community?
- Influence/Authority: Is there a mutual benefit for the stakeholder (e.g. will their participation help the organization make progress on organizational commitments related to improving food and nutrition security)?

Using your best judgement, place the stakeholder groups and organizations (not individual people) in this chart:

		Potential Interest	
		Low	High
Authority/Influence	Low		
	High		



High authority/influence, high interest: Prioritize inviting representatives placed in this category to participate on the Advisory Panel. It is important to have their buy-in on the decisions made. These stakeholders may be critical to the success of any resulting initiatives.

High authority/influence, low interest: It may not be necessary to include on the Advisory Panel stakeholders that are placed in this category to connect and inform them about the project. They could be helpful in supporting the decisions the Advisory Panel recommends, or, alternatively, they could hinder progress. Explain the prioritization process and ask for their perspectives. Plan to share a summary of the results or even consider involving them in the final prioritization to address their concerns prior to sharing the results more broadly.

Low authority/influence, high interest: Stakeholders from this category benefit the Advisory Panel by providing a voice from the community who will be impacted by the prioritized food security solutions. It may be beneficial (some might say essential) to keep this stakeholder group updated on the activities, process and results.

Low authority/influence, low interest: It is probably not necessary or useful to include stakeholders on the Advisory Panel from this category; however, consider sharing a summary of the results to promote future engagement.

Note that if the prioritization process is applied within one organization, most or all advisory panel members will be internal. In this circumstance, the advisory panel is supporting that organization in identifying its priorities. If the process is applied at the community level, then multiple entities should have the opportunity to be represented. In this circumstance, the advisory panel is identifying priorities that will apply to the community or to a coalition of organizations.

Extend an Invitation

Once key stakeholders are identified, extend an invitation for them to participate via email, letter, phone call or in-person meeting. The engagement tactic should be tailored to the stakeholder. For example, a younger stakeholder may prefer a personal email, while an older stakeholder may be best enrolled through a phone call. Communication in any form should clearly explain the opportunity and benefit to both the community and the stakeholder — this is about maximizing impact for vulnerable populations in a manner that is transparent, fair, explicit and rigorous. The communication also should include expectations for participation on the decision team, such as the time commitment and types of activities they will be involved in.

Here is sample language to invite relevant stakeholders to join the decision team and participate in this process.



Dear <insert name>

My name is <insert name> <insert title or role in the food security field> of <insert organization here> reaching out today on behalf of an initiative to help address hunger in our community. Did you know that <insert compelling statistic here — e.g. “40 percent of children in our town will go to bed hungry this year?”>? When I learned that so many of our neighbors struggle with food insecurity every day, I knew it was time to take action.

As an invested member of our community, I/**we** would like to invite you to participate in this initiative as a member of our decision team. We will be utilizing the *Food Security Solutions Prioritization Guide* from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Foundation, which will step us through a formal process to help identify the areas of greatest need and the program mix that will make the biggest impact in reducing hunger here in <insert location>.

As a member of the team, you will be asked to contribute your time and expertise to this process, including participating in two or three meetings. I would like to schedule time for us to connect via phone to share more about this important undertaking.

Food and nutrition security go hand in hand with health outcomes. By addressing hunger, we can also begin to tackle the unique health challenges of the 21st century, including obesity, chronic disease, depression and anxiety, and help our community to truly flourish.

I hope you will join me in the fight against hunger!

Sincerely,
<insert name>

Clarify Roles and Responsibilities

With primary responsibility for facilitating the process, the Advisory Panel will decide how to involve others and delegate tasks, depending on the extent of the information available, the availability of others and the timeline for the prioritization process. The Advisory Panel is ultimately responsible for:

- Facilitating the outlined Food Security Solutions Prioritization Process;



- Creating and keeping a project timeline;
- Facilitating meetings and following up with stakeholders on next steps; and
- Interacting with and involving the community-at-large when necessary.

Members of the Advisory Panel are expected to:

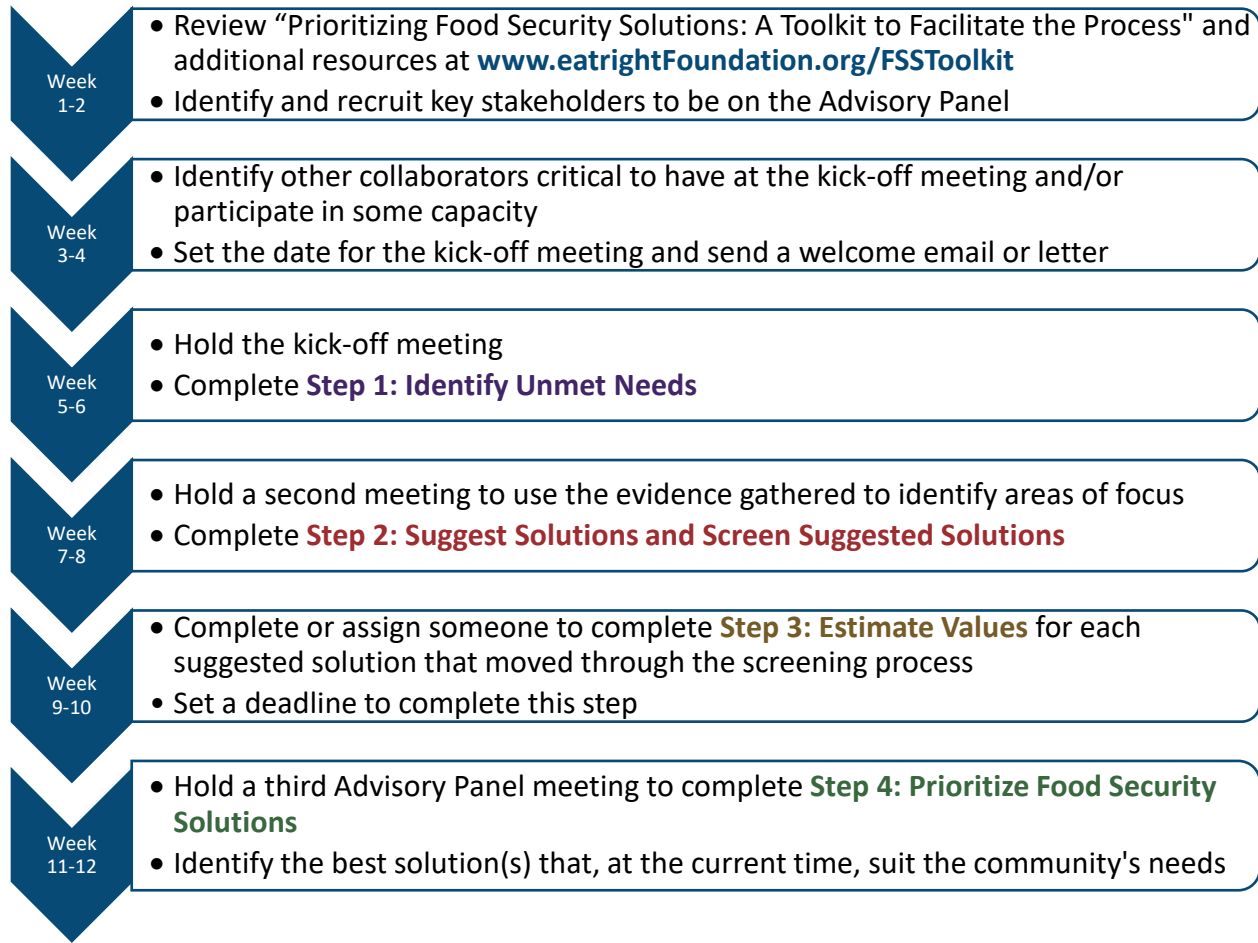
- Provide input to form the Advisory Panel, including suggesting additional stakeholders;
- Provide input and expertise to complete each of the steps;
- Promote objective dialogue, based on the data available, and document clearly to promote transparency;
- Provide input and expertise to complete Step 3, as requested by the team leader;
- Participate in the decision team meeting to prioritize and select appropriate new program(s) and/or modifications of existing programs for the community (Step 4); and
- Contribute and suggest resources to support the implementation of the process.

It may be beneficial to appoint a 'chairperson' or 'team leader' to keep things organized, centralize communication and final documents, adhere to the agreed upon timeline, drive the process and hold stakeholders accountable.

Example timeline

The initial Food Security Solutions (FSS) Prioritization Process can be completed in a few weeks or over many months, depending on the community's specific situation and goals. While this timeline spans 12 weeks, do not feel like you must complete the whole process within that period or to spend only 1-2 weeks for each set of action items.

The timeline is flexible and will vary depending on the size of your community, the number of existing programs or initiatives, how readily available relevant data are and the amount of time per week that you can dedicate to this process. However, it is also important to set clear goals and firm deadlines to garner momentum and to keep from becoming overwhelmed.



Once your advisory panel is assembled and understands the details of the process, goals and timeline, begin the process.