organizations, including UTE. This network launched a social media campaign to raise awareness and encourage action among individuals, farmers, institutions, restaurants, and other stakeholders to prevent food waste. In-person events with educational opportunities about food resource management, composting, and repurposing food were also held. UTE faculty coordinated a statewide food drive for TFWAW, inviting county UTE offices to host a food drive as part of the statewide initiative. UTE county agents worked with local partners and 4-H youth to collect nutritious food donations and provide education about food waste and food insecurity via social media, in-person presentations, informational booths, and other methods.

**Evaluation Methods:** UTE county staff completed an online survey to report outcomes of their food drive.

**Results:** Over 617,000 Tennesseans were reached through education and outreach. Forty-three of 95 UTE County offices, in rural and urban areas, participated in the food drive. UTE collaborated with grocery stores, schools, and media outlets, collecting over 12,000 pounds of food and providing over 11,000 meals.

**Conclusion:** This statewide initiative to improve nutrition security and reduce food waste provides an example of how to address and coordinate these efforts to help improve donations and quality of donations at food banks.

**Funding:** Nutrition Education Program Design Implementation and Evaluation

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**Empowering Volunteers in a Rural Community to Improve Nutrition Security**

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**Objective:** Evaluate the impact of an Extension-supported intervention to improve nutrition security on the capacity of local volunteers.

**Use of Theory or Research:** Ten percent of US households experience food insecurity. Prevalence is even higher among some households, including those in rural areas. Community-based interventions that engage community members to design, implement, and sustain interventions have been effective in improving nutrition security.

**Target Audience:** Community volunteers and steering committee members.

**Program Description:** In one rural, economically distressed Tennessee county, Extension personnel supported community volunteers to address rising rates of food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of a CDC High Obesity Program (HOP), Extension personnel convened partners and volunteers to implement food distributions through the United States Department of Agriculture Farmers-to-Families program (FtF). Through this Extension-supported intervention, volunteers gained experience and self-efficacy collaborating to address an emerging need. When FtF ended, volunteers formed a community-driven partner network to improve nutrition security with continued support from Extension in the form of education, resources, and connections with community partners.

**Evaluation Methods:** Extension personnel regularly met with volunteers to determine needs and evaluate projects. Extension personnel also evaluated the program through Ripple Effects Mapping with community leaders serving on a steering committee for the HOP project.

**Results:** Volunteers formed a sustainable network of 41 volunteers representing 29 organizations to improve nutrition security. Following FtF distributions, the network hosted 17 mobile food distributions, established one new food pantry, and supported five food pantries. H2O steering committee members who participated in Ripple Effects Mapping identified the food distributions as a critical first step towards engaging the community to address food insecurity.

**Conclusion:** An Extension supported intervention increased capacity of volunteers to improve nutrition security in a rural county. Extension staff, embedded in rural and urban communities, across the United States can leverage partnerships and resources to address emerging needs, empower communities, and improve nutrition security.

**Funding:** Center for Disease Control and Prevention

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**Engaging Black Men and Fathers in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - Education (SNAP-Ed)**

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**Objective:** To address the gender disparity in SNAP-Ed’s adult participants, a statewide team formed to engage more men and fathers in their families’ healthy behaviors around food, physical activity, and mental flourishing. They tailored their engagements to the interests, concerns and needs of men and fathers.

**Use of Theory or Research:** Social Determinants of Health - in spaces where families experience health disparities due to systemic racism and persistent disinvestments, nutrition and health must be understood within the contexts of where people live, work, learn and play. Deeper understanding of lived experiences is especially critical for fathers who have been largely under-represented in nutrition education. The program utilizes participatory approaches to understand fathers’ perspectives and experiences.

**Target Audience:** African American men and fathers living in an urban neighborhood with a history of redlining and systemic racism that has created persistent poverty and lack of access

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