

# 30 WAYS IN 30 DAYS



## Five Categories

Advocate

Organize

Experience

Donate

Volunteer



## RATIONALE

Hunger Action Month comes alive in a personal way when individuals are invited to define THEIR WAY to help. There are five broad categories for “My Way”: Advocate, Organize, Volunteer, Experience, and Donate. Depending on an individual and their own interest, they can choose a category that best fits them. Below is an introduction, explaining how to select which “My Way” category fits someone best – followed by specific “ways” within each broad category.

## MY WAY to help fight hunger... What's YOUR way?

September is Hunger Action Month, and we're asking you to take action to fight hunger in America. How can you take a stand? There are many ways -in fact, you can download a local calendar to find **30 Ways in 30 Days** to make a difference. But each of us has our own particular interests and strengths. Are you an advocate? An organizer? A doer? A donor?

Choose your primary way to help -- then take the pledge, and share it with the world. You can do it all in three easy steps:

1. Visit [www.hungeractionmonth.org](http://www.hungeractionmonth.org), find your “way,” and pledge to fight hunger.
2. Post your personalized “My Way” badge and status update to on your Facebook, Twitter, and other social network pages.
3. Involve the youth in your life (or if you're a youth yourself – get involved)! There are many family-friendly, youth-oriented, and appropriate-for-all-ages activities included under each category.
4. Start taking action – then share your experiences with the world! Throughout Hunger Action Month, by sharing your commitment, whatever it might be, you will help to further the cause.

**Thank you for pledging to make a difference!**

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## ADVOCATE.

Taking a stand can mean raising your voice, raising awareness, and rallying for change. Advocacy is a powerful and critical way to make a difference. If you're willing to speak up for others, ask for change, and work to draw attention to the issue of hunger in America, advocacy might be your way! Here are some ways to enact your Hunger Action Month pledge:

- **Designate Awareness.** Encourage mayors, state legislators, counties and municipalities to officially designate September as Hunger Action Month through resolutions and proclamations. Contact your local food bank to learn more about current local and national legislation and initiatives.
- **Call your Member of Congress.** Show grassroots support for hunger issues.
- **Register to vote.** If you're not registered to vote – get registered! It's quick, easy, and gives you the opportunity to exercise your right to vote on important issues – including hunger. If you are registered to vote, encourage others to register. Visit [www.canivote.org](http://www.canivote.org) to learn how to register.
- **Recruit new signers.** Email 10 of your friends (or write a note on Facebook... or Tweet the link) and encourage friends and family to take their own Hunger Action Month pledge.
- **Attend a County Commissioner, City Council or County Council Meeting.** Attend a civic meeting in the month of September; if hunger is not on the agenda, during suggestions from the floor, mention Hunger Action Month and encourage people to get involved.
- **Food Stamps Inquiry.** More advocacy: ask if your local grocery store accepts food stamps. If they don't, ask them to change their policy.
- **Get familiar with 211.** Call the United Way 211 hotline to see what food banks, food pantries and soup kitchens are in your area, and where volunteers are needed.
- **Download a conversation starter.** Find facts and conversation starters about hunger in America at [www.hungeractionmonth.org](http://www.hungeractionmonth.org); bring them to your next book club, Bible study, etc, and start a conversation about the issue.
- **Write a letter.** Write a letter to your elected officials about hunger. Visit [www.congress.org](http://www.congress.org) for contact information, and find sample letters on the Hunger Action Month website.
- **Start Here: Local Petition.** Collect signatures / pledges from people in your neighborhood to end hunger in your community.
- **Write an Op-Ed piece / article your congregation or community newsletter.** Sharing information about the issue of hunger facing our country with your community can work to start raising awareness, and ultimately mobilizing others. Visit [www.hungeractionmonth.org](http://www.hungeractionmonth.org) for some Op Ed / article templates!
- **Wear it on Your Sleeve.** A great activity for children and families – design your own T-shirt with facts about hunger, such as "Hunger is a reality for nearly 1 in 4 American children." (Source: 2009 USDA data)

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### ORGANIZE.

Getting other people involved can really make a difference! Can you see yourself planning a group activity, a fundraising event, or maybe organizing a rally, march or awareness-raising potluck event? If you have co-workers, a youth group, friends, fellow congregants, teammates, and are willing to get them together to tackle the hunger issue, organization is your way! Here are some ways to enact your Hunger Action Month pledge:

- **Walk for Hunger, Run for Hunger.** Coordinate an athletic fundraising event to raise awareness/donations (and improve your community's health!)
- **Brown Bag Lunch Day (or Week).** Encourage co-workers, co-congregants, fellow students, etc, to bring in brown bag lunches for a day (or a week), and donate the money saved to a local hunger-relief charity.
- **Interfaith Service.** Plan an ecumenical service. Involve multiple local congregations, to reflect as a community on the issue of hunger.
- **Taste of Our Community Event.** Work with multiple local restaurants and businesses to put together a benefit tasting-event, where the restaurants donate food, get great publicity – and ticket sales all benefit food banks.
- **Local Restaurant Dine & Give Days.** See if local restaurants will designate a day to give a portion of their profits to your local food bank. You can also check to see if there are national chains participating in Hunger Action Month dine & give opportunities, and organize a group outing to enjoy some dinner together and feel good that a portion of the proceeds are going to those in need.
- **Dinner parties.** Host a potluck party, and over dinner, discuss hunger and how guests can make a difference. They can even bring donations to the dinner party!
- **Food Drive.** Organize a food drive – and be sure to check with your local food bank, pantry or shelter to determine what their needs truly are!
- **Simultaneous Action.** Get connected with other communities and larger Hunger Action Month initiatives. My Way Wednesdays and Our Way Weekends have some events with simultaneous-action opportunities.
- **Youth Group events.** With your Boys Scout, Girl Scout, 4-H Club, Youth Group – have an awareness/donation-raising event, like a “Lock-In to Lock-Out Hunger.”
- **Awards Event.** Are there folks in your community making a difference? Raise awareness about Hunger Action Month, and call attention to their good work, by planning an Awards Event for the “Hunger Hero’s” in your community.
- **Cook And Care!** Have your faith group make their favorite recipes and bring them to a gathering. Raffle them and share them, then donate the proceeds to your local food bank.
- **Harvest Hope.** Check with your local food bank to see if they have a partnership with a local farmers market. Organize your friends and neighbors to buy produce at that market.
- **Calendar Share!** Send the 30 Ways in 30 Days Calendar to your friends and family.
- **Children for Change (Children’s Rally).** Work with local schools, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, etc, to organize a children’s march, parade, or event to help children’s voices be heard in ending hunger in America.

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## EXPERIENCE.

We always understand an idea better when we truly experience it. Picture yourself living on a food stamp budget for a week (or a day), reading to your kids about food insecurity, or fasting for a day. If these actions seem intriguing, maybe having tangible experiences is be your way to participate in Hunger Action Month! Here are some ways to enact your pledge:

- **Tour Your Local Food Bank.** Visit your local food bank, find out if you can take a tour of the facility to see what resources they offer your community.
- **Fast for a Day.** Spend a day experiencing hunger firsthand – going without meals for a day, and reflecting throughout your fast on the experience of missing those meals, realizing for many, it is an all-too-real experience.
- **Food Stamp Challenge / \$7 Per Day.** Try to spend only seven dollars on food for a day (or a week), the average food stamps allotment - and experience what having limited resources to allocate for food can feel like.
- **Set an empty plate at your table.** Let this be a reminder to you (and your family members or roommates) of those who are at risk for hunger.
- **Add Some Extra Plates, Plus an Empty One.** Invite people over for dinner, and just like the action above, set an empty place at the table. Talk with your guests about what it's like to have that reminder joining them at the table.
- **Read About It.** Download and read the food security report at [www.foodgatherers.org](http://www.foodgatherers.org); do a search and find the most recent studies about hunger in America online; or read a book about food.
- **Skip the latte.** Instead of buying coffee, make coffee at home (and consider donating what you would have spent on coffee each day to your local food bank!).
- **Blog it. Tweet it. Share it.** Write about your experiences, and share them with the world, via your Facebook page, Twitter account or blog.
- **Letter to the Editor.** Submit an article or letter to the editor to your local newspaper, magazine, or community newsletter about hunger in your community, or what Hunger Action Month means to you. Sample letter templates and article templates can be found at [www.hungeractionmonth.org](http://www.hungeractionmonth.org).
- **Attend a lecture or event.** Is there anything going on in your community for Hunger Action Month? Check the calendar, and plan to attend an event.
- **Read to your children.** There are many children's books that tackle the issue of hunger in an age-appropriate manner, such as Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen by DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan or A Kids' Guide to Hunger & Homelessness: How to Take Action! by Cathryn Berger Kaye.

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## DONATE.

Food banks are always need financial support. You can donate to your local food bank or other hunger-relief organization – and, if you’re in a financial position to do so, consider “matching” other local donations and helping raise even more funds. Is donation your way? Here are some ways to enact your Hunger Action Month pledge:

- **Make a one-time donation.** Whatever you can spare, right now, donate to your local food bank or the Feeding America network.
  - **Establish an ongoing donation.** If you can afford to give a little, each month, consider setting up an automatic-withdrawal of a designated amount from your account each month to go towards fighting hunger.
  - **Donate the RIGHT kind of food.** Money isn’t the only thing you can donate – but before donating food, call your local food bank and find out what their current needs are. Your food bank can tell you what their wish list includes – which canned goods, basics (flour, corn meal, etc) or unexpected-needs are going unmet.
  - **Matching Donations.** If you’re in a financial position to give a little more, and encourage others to give, put out a matching-donations challenge, and match dollar-for-dollar (or 50 cents on the dollar, or double the dollar...) the contributions of other donors, up to your comfortable designated amount.
  - **After you share a donation, share the news!** After you make a contribution, post about your donation in the social media world – and share a link, too, encouraging others to join you in donating!
- **Donate a percentage of your proceeds.** If you’re a business owner, consider designating a day during Hunger Action Month to donate a portion of your proceeds to your local food bank. It will make a difference, raise awareness – and be a great way to promote your business!
  - **Put out a collection box.** Take up collections at your office, congregation, anywhere where the leadership is comfortable with you setting out a box to collect donations to be shared with a local food bank.
  - **Beyond Food: gather personal care items for a local shelter.** Contact the shelter ahead of time to see which items would be most useful.
  - **Shop For A Cause.** By a savings pass from your local food bank to save 20% on your purchase at Macy’s on Oct. 16th. Invite others to shop with you, and spread the word!

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## VOLUNTEER.

Whether it's staffing a fundraising event, sorting and repacking food at your local food bank or serving lunch at a soup kitchen - there are so many opportunities to volunteer your time to fight hunger. Here are some ways to enact your Hunger Action Month pledge:

- **Volunteer at your local food bank.** Food banks depend on volunteers to inspect, sort, and repack "salvaged" food and grocery products received from the community. Visit your local food bank's website to see what kind of volunteer opportunities they offer, and sign up to participate!
- **Volunteer at a local soup kitchen.** Sign up to volunteer and prepare or serve a meal at a local soup kitchen or shelter.
- **Volunteer at a local food pantry.** Food pantries provide a place where community members in need can come in to 'shop,' free of charge, for basics they need to take home. Find out if you can sign up to volunteer in the pantry.
- **Volunteer at a Hunger Action Month event.** Check the calendar – is there an upcoming fundraising or awareness event for Hunger Action Month? Contact the coordinator and see if they can use some more volunteers!
- **License to Volunteer!** If you have a driver license, find out if there's a local Meals on Wheels or other food delivery program that needs volunteer drivers. If they can't take volunteer drivers, see if you can volunteer in some other way (or if they need folks to donate gas cards!).
- **Post Volunteer Opportunities!** Once you have a sense of what some of the volunteer opportunities around town might be, ask organizations if they would like help publicizing the opportunities – and then share the information on your Facebook page, blog, Twitter page, etc.
- **Volunteer to do a reading of children's books about hunger awareness at your local library.** There are lots of books written for different age groups that help kids understand the struggle against hunger. There are many children's books that tackle the issue of hunger in an age-appropriate manner, such as Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen by DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan or A Kids' Guide to Hunger & Homelessness: How to Take Action! by Cathryn Berger Kaye. You'll be planting the seeds of awareness early!
- **Volunteer Stories.** Once you have spent some time volunteering, share a quick post (or longer blog or article) about your experience and what it meant to you. Your story may inspire others to consider undertaking their own volunteer pledge.