



Chicago Teen Food Literacy Curriculum

Facilitator's Materials

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Adapted by Olivia Arena and Samantha Batko for the Chicago Teen Food Literacy Program Pilot in Chicago's Altgeld Gardens

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Contents

Acknowledgments	vii
Introduction	1
How to Use This Guide	1
After the Program Is Completed	5
Notes	5
References	6
Defining Our Space	7
Welcome and Check-In (10 Minutes)	7
Activity One: Story of Self (25 Minutes)	9
Activity Two: Food Justice Mural (20 Minutes)	10
Activity Three: Community Guidelines (10 Minutes)	11
Activity Four: Teen Iron Chef Snack Builder (45 Minutes)	12
Close Out (10 Minutes)	14
What Does “Healthy” Mean?	16
Welcome and Check-In (10 Minutes)	16
Activity One: What Does “Healthy” Mean Anyway? (20 Minutes)	16
Activity Two: What Are Calories? (40 Minutes)	18
Activity Three: Practicing the 10 Percent Rule (30 Minutes)	20
Activity Four: What Is Processed Food? (15 Minutes)	23
Close Out (10 Minutes)	24
Sugar Sugar	25
Welcome and Check-In (10 Minutes)	25
Activity One: Snack Breakdown (10 Minutes)	25
Activity Two: Sugar in Our Body (40 Minutes)	27
Close Out (5 Minutes)	29
What the Heck Is Fat?	30
Welcome and Check-In (10 Minutes)	30
Activity One: Lily Pads (20 Minutes)	30
Activity Two: Blubber Burger (35 Minutes)	31
Activity Three: Fat in Our Bodies (50 Minutes)	32
Close Out (5 Minutes)	35
Cooking Demo	36
Welcome and Check-In (10 Minutes)	36

Activity One: Cooking Demo (70 Minutes)	36
Activity Two: Shopping on a Budget (35 Minutes)	38
Close Out (5 Minutes)	39
Our Food System	40
Welcome and Check-In (10 Minutes)	40
Activity One: Between the Lines (30 Minutes)	40
Activity Two: Life Cycle of Food (50 Minutes)	41
Activity Three: Appetite for Change (25 Minutes)	44
Close Out (5 Minutes)	45
What Is Food Insecurity?	46
Welcome and Check-In (10 Minutes)	46
Activity One: What Does Hunger Look Like? (40 Minutes)	46
Activity Two: What Is Food Insecurity? (40 Minutes)	48
Activity Three: Change Is Possible (25 Minutes)	49
Close Out (5 Minutes)	50
Food Deserts	51
Welcome and Check-In (10 Minutes)	51
Activity One: Healthier Choices (15 Minutes)	51
Activity Two: Opinion Game (20 Minutes)	51
Activity Three: Food Deserts (40 Minutes)	52
Activity Four: Ideal Food Community (35 minutes)	54
Close Out (5 Minutes)	55
Food Choice	56
Welcome and Check-In (10 Minutes)	56
Activity One: Causes and Consequences (35 Minutes)	56
Activity Two: Food Choice (35 Minutes)	58
Activity Three: Video Clips and Teens in Other Communities (35 Minutes)	60
Close Out (5 Minutes)	61
Reflection	65
My Community, My Home	66
Welcome and Check-In (10 Minutes)	66
Activity One: Community Asset Mapping (65 Minutes)	66
Activity Two: Thank You Notes (40 Minutes)	68
Close Out (5 Minutes)	69
Identities and Food	70
Welcome and Check-In (10 Minutes)	70

Activity One: Iceberg (20 Minutes)	70
Activity Two: Identifiers and Food (45 Minutes)	72
Activity Three: Food Scenarios—People’s Assumptions (40 Minutes)	73
Close Out (5 Minutes)	76
Our Food Justice	77
Welcome and Check-In: (10 Minutes)	77
Activity One: Stereotyping Exercise (25 Minutes)	77
Activity Two: Paths that Shape Inequality and Limit People Power (45 Minutes)	78
Activity Three: Finding Our Role in Local Food Justice (35 Minutes)	79
Close Out (5 Minutes)	80
Tying It All Together	81
Welcome and Check-In: (10 Minutes)	81
Activity One: We’re All Connected String Exercise (10 Minutes)	81
Activity Two: Problems with Our Food System (35 Minutes)	82
Activity Three: Solutions within Our Food System (35 Minutes)	83
Activity Four: Potluck (25 Minutes)	85
Close Out (5 Minutes)	85
Action Campaign Goals	86
Welcome and Check-In (10 Minutes)	86
Activity One: Goal and Objective Setting (60 Minutes)	86
Activity Two: Who Is In Our Corner? (45 Minutes)	87
Close Out (5 Minutes)	89
Action Campaign Timeline	90
Welcome and Check-In (15 Minutes)	90
Activity One: Teen Leaders (30 Minutes)	90
Activity Two: Timeline Creation (30 Minutes)	91
Activity Three: Mapping the Action Timeline (30 Minutes)	93
Activity Four: Next Steps (15 Minutes)	95
Close Out (5 Minutes)	95
Organizing Our Action Campaign Project	97
Welcome and Check-In (10 Minutes)	97
Activity One: Breakout Session Planning (30 Minutes)	97
Activity Two: Internal Capacity (50 Minutes)	99
Activity Three: Bringing It Back In (25 Minutes)	100
Close Out (5 Minutes)	101
What Do We Need to Move Forward?	102

Welcome and Check-In (10 Minutes)	102
Activity One: Self-reflection (20 Minutes)	102
Activity Two: Group Reflection (20 Minutes)	103
Activity Three: Looking Forward (25 Minutes)	103
Close Out (5 Minutes)	104
Graduation Celebration (40 Minutes)	104
About the Authors	105
Statement of Independence	106

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Introduction

This document provides detailed discussion guides and instructions for facilitating a 16-session course intended to teach leadership skills to teens through the lens of food literacy¹ and advocacy. The goal of the Teen Food Literacy Program (TFLP) and curriculum is to help develop teen mentors and leaders that are equipped to support their peers around issues related to food equity and security. This course asks teens to grapple with concepts of identity and intersectionality, food justice, and food literacy by engaging in empowerment activities that can guide them in personal and group goals.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Facilitators and Facilitation

This guide is intended for adult facilitators who will lead discussion sessions with small cohorts of teens (roughly 8 to 15).

Facilitation does not require a background in teaching, but it does require someone who has experience with (1) low-income teens and leadership development; (2) food system, food justice,² or food security issues; and (3) local-level nonprofits, community organizations, schools, government entities, and the like that work with teens and/or food issues. The facilitator is essential to establishing a safe and inclusive space. It is important for them to be an active listener, adept at managing group dynamics, and able to relate and communicate effectively with teens. In the Chicago pilot, teens recommended a facilitator in the same age range as teens or a college student. They wanted a facilitator that can understand where they are coming from and relate to their experiences.

In addition to financial compensation for the adult facilitator, there are some additional costs associated with this curriculum. Make sure that there is a budget for the materials noted at the beginning of each session, which may include paper, markers, and other supplies. In the Portland pilot, we provided teens with \$20 stipends and a meal for each session they attended (Galvez et al. 2018). Stipends or incentives to cover travel or food expense can be crucial to supporting the participation of teens with limited economic resources. Asking teens to contribute time, energy, and ideas should be acknowledged with some form of compensation or recognition. However, in the Chicago pilot, teen participants recommended that stipends be awarded at the end of the session or turned into an event or field trip. Each cohort can decide how to distribute incentives; some examples include gift cards for meals, cash stipends distributed at each session, and a stipend at the end based on the number of sessions attended.

Teens in the Chicago pilot recommended adding more events like field trips. These excursions would need to be budgeted for and include transportation, meals or snacks, and coordination with local partners. In discussing the content of the field trips, teens proposed two that would help contextualize learnings. One suggestion was a trip to the Greater Chicago Food Depository (GCDF was a local partner in the Chicago pilot). The second suggestion was a trip to various grocery stores to compare their food and pricing. Teens expressed that they felt stigmatized when they entered certain stores, so a trip to those stores could help to overcome those unwelcoming feelings.

Before the course begins, it is important for facilitators to read through the entire curriculum and get an understanding of the big picture goals and how they relate to individual session objectives. Additionally, facilitators need to know what materials will be required for each session.

Listed below are some tips for facilitation based on the Portland and Chicago pilot experiences:

- Challenge teens to lead and share their voice. Guide the discussions and encourage participation. Keep objectives in mind and avoiding lecturing.
- Adjust the curriculum to better fit the community or group dynamics.
- Remember the importance of diversity and inclusion, and have ground rules for ensuring equity in participation. If conflicts arise during the course, acknowledge and address them using principles of positivity, courtesy, nonconfrontation, and understanding rather than singling out a participant or using punishment. Set ground rules early on regarding what will happen if there are safety concerns in the group.
- Set ground rules about what will happen if there are safety concerns in the community on a day when sessions are scheduled.
- If discussions on sensitive topics trigger something or reveal crises in teens' lives, be prepared to refer them to the appropriate support and resources to address their individual needs. For example, several of the sessions may be triggering for teens suffering from eating disorders. It is important for the facilitator to develop connections to supportive services in advance that the teens and facilitator can contact if needed. It might be helpful for the facilitator to develop a resource card in advance listing hotlines and local organizations that can be handed to all teens in the program if triggering conversations occur. For topics around nutrition and eating habits, facilitators should be equipped with resources for teens who may be suffering from an eating disorder. Resources can be found online through many sites, like the National Eating Disorders Association.
- Be flexible on timing. If teens feel that the activities are running long, adjust to make sessions shorter or more discussion-based. Alternatively, teens in Chicago recommended making some of the activities into worksheets. For example, there are several parts to Activity 1: Story of Self; one of these components could be excluded, or questions could be moved to a worksheet. Teens liked the idea of moving debrief questions into worksheet form at the end of sessions.

The facilitator should make sure that the teens know how to contact the facilitator and other group members throughout the course, how the facilitator will communicate any scheduling changes to teens, and whether these communication mechanisms are also open to program graduates after the completion of the course sessions.

Course and Session Structure

This course consists of 16 sessions. Each session curriculum is structured for two-hour meetings, but optional or additional elements are noted in the guide. Every cohort of teens and every community is different, so the curriculum should be adapted based on the youth participants. If the course is concurrent with the school calendar, it could take a semester to complete if sessions are held weekly. Weekly sessions can help keep the engagement and information fresh in teens' minds. Depending on the age of students participating, the timing of sessions may need to be adjusted. For example, older teens may be more involved in extracurricular activities or working. In the two pilots, teens voted on when they would meet, deciding to skip weeks when they were on school break or when many members had scheduling conflicts.

The first portion of each session contains facilitator notes, which include objectives of the session, materials required, and glossary terms. Each part of the sessions has suggested time limits that can be modified depending on how long the group needs to complete activities. During the welcome portion of each session, the facilitator should provide an overview of the objectives and definitions of the glossary terms. The check-in time is a way to welcome teens to their space and signal a break from the rest of their day. This check-in could include inviting the teens to get up and stretch before settling into their seats or having the teens share about their day. The icebreaker is meant to build a sense of community between the teens who may not have previously known each other as well as set the precedent that everyone is encouraged to speak up. The facilitator can also allow teens to lead their own icebreaker to begin to develop leadership. Each session has room for an icebreaker, which can be combined with the check-in if the facilitator sees fit.

After the introduction and welcome, the sessions are constructed around activities to address the objectives of the session. Activities are designed to be hands-on and interactive. Sessions 1 through 5 focus on building food literacy knowledge, sessions 6 through 11 focus on building an understanding of food justice and identity, and sessions 12 through 16 focus on creating action plans and community engagement projects. The curriculum should be adapted as needed to ensure that the sessions are not overly structured and that teens have ample opportunity for organic, teen-led discussion.

Each session will conclude by going over the “pluses and deltas” of the group and completing a “solidarity clap.” The pluses-and-deltas reflection is an opportunity for the facilitator to listen to the teens’ thoughts about the session and adapt future sessions to better fit group needs. The solidarity clap provides a physical and auditory transition out of the space and helps to build a sense of community.

Modifications to Reflect Community

This curriculum was written for youth ages 12 to 18. Given the broad age range, it is recommended that each iteration of this course narrow the age range of participants and revise the materials based on the literacy levels of the group, considering potential language barriers. In Portland, the curriculum was 13 sessions, but in Chicago, sessions were added to cover basic nutritional information.

In addition to literacy level, all sessions will need to be revised to contextualize the material within individual communities. This step is important because it helps teens to connect to the material in a more tangible way and builds toward the final sessions when teens will engage in a food-related project in the community. Sessions will have prompts that facilitators can use to prompt place-based discussion and detail. Testing the curriculum with a couple of teens or consulting with educators familiar with the community could be useful to ensure the content is appropriate.

This course should be modified to fit the needs of the teens by considering identity-related sensitivities. For example, one session discusses diet-related diseases and impacts on a person’s health, but not all teens in the room may realize that diabetes can be a result of poor nutrition, and some teens’ lives may be affected by diabetes. Another example is discussing healthy food and understanding that not all teens may have the resources to acquire healthier foods, and promoting healthy food as “good” and unhealthy food as “bad” could be perceived as placing value judgments on teens and the foods traditionally provided by their families in accordance with cultural norms. Additionally, it is important to be cognizant of any disordered eating.

Finally, the curriculum should be adjusted so that the teens can take ownership over this program and each of the sessions. Teens should be allowed to contribute to the purpose statement of the TFLP and to add their own vocabulary. Participants should also have a say in defining the outcomes and goals of their work. The specific goals of each iteration of this curriculum may vary depending on the makeup of the teens, current events in the community, and varied dedication of partner organizations. Part of including teens in the ownership over this program is allowing them to participate in all decision-making processes, including decisions between organizations and helping to set and understand expectations from all teens and partners.

AFTER THE PROGRAM IS COMPLETED

After the 16 sessions are completed, the curriculum assumes that teens will still set time aside to complete their community engagement project. Each iteration of this curriculum will involve a different level of phasing out formal facilitation and passing the baton to the teens to lead their community engagement project. In some cases, especially if the youth cohort is younger, the facilitator may want to explore attending these community engagement sessions after the teens complete the 16-week course.

In Portland, the curriculum is only 13 sessions, and once youth complete the 13-week course, they are invited to participate in future iterations of the project as cofacilitators. This allows alumni to stay connected, and also provides positive role models for TFLP participants. If using teen cofacilitators, the adult cofacilitator should meet with the cofacilitators often to discuss expectations at each session, the difference between teaching and facilitation, and what to do if problems arise.

In the Chicago Pilot, TFLP participants in cohort 1 helped organize a food distribution event in their community after completing the course. Participants selected for cohort 2 were also invited to participate in running the event. The food distribution events are scheduled to continue monthly, allowing the new group of teens to participate in a community event while learning from the curriculum. It also allows TFLP alumni to take ownership of knowledge sharing and orienting future participants. However, it is still important for teens in later cohorts to feel empowered to change the project, alter components, make revisions to material, and add elements.

NOTES

1. We apply Vidgen and Gallegos's (2014, 54) definition of food literacy, "the scaffolding that empowers individuals, households, communities or nations to protect diet quality through change and strengthen dietary resilience over time. It is composed of a collection of inter-related knowledge, skills and behaviors required to plan, manage, select, prepare and eat food to meet needs and determine intake."
2. We apply Holt-Giménez and Wang's (2011, 88) definition of food justice (who refer to Gottlieb and Joshi 2010) as a social movement with "'multiple layers...of producers, processors, workers, eaters, or communities,' for whom race, ethnicity, class, and gender issues are at the forefront of an agenda that includes a mix of 'producing food, local preference, environment, economic development, health food for all, preparing, cooking and eating, and public health and nutrition.'"

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Session 1

Defining Our Space

Objectives: During this session, teens will start developing a common purpose for engaging in their community and in the program as a team. Teens will also begin to set norms for the group, ensuring inclusive spaces for reflection, learning, and understanding. At the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- express their purpose and goals for joining the program, as well as the purpose of the program;
- develop the norms of the space; and
- begin to understand team dynamics.

Materials: Poster board, markers and other art supplies, dot stickers, poster defining food justice, grocery items, utensils, and some kitchen supplies.



WELCOME AND CHECK-IN (10 MINUTES)

Check-In Circle

It is important to recognize that the teens' lives outside your time together may be chaotic. It can be helpful to start the beginning of each workshop with a ritual to signal to the teens that they are entering a safe space. This activity could be standing up, inhaling and exhaling together, stretching together, a unity clap, playing a song and singing along, etc. Pick an activity that will work for the teens in the room and make sure that there is consistency in starting this activity on time, at the start of every workshop before the check-in circle.

Ask the youth to sit in a circle. Going around, give each teen the opportunity to introduce themselves and check-in to the space. Model what this looks like: "I'm feeling stressed today, because my dog threw up just as I was leaving for work, causing me to be late. I've spent a lot of my day trying to catch up."

This is a good way to debrief from the day and frame the start of each session. You could combine the check-in with a stretch, a chant, a candle or other smell, etc. This provides teens with a way to leave their day behind and become present in the space.

Review Agenda

Introduce program purpose, basic logistics, and overarching expectations. Spend time discussing the curriculum objectives, and make sure the teens know why they are there and what they will learn.

Suggested Phrasing: *“The Teen Food Literacy Program (TFLP) is a 16-session course where you will gain skills and experiences in empowerment, self-efficacy, and food literacy. It will end with you all engaging in a community-based project that you will design and execute yourselves. You will use what you learn during the TFLP sessions to build your community-based project. But, before we get started, we should all learn about each other.”*

Over the next 16 sessions, you all are here to develop leadership skills; gain a stronger understanding of the food system; recognize how food plays an important role in peoples’ social, economic, political, and physical well-being; and start understanding how to take action to address issues within the food system.”

Icebreaker

The name game is a good first icebreaker. Have the participants say their names and a food that they like that starts with the same letter as their name. Then have them repeat the name and food of all the people before them. For example, “Hi Mashed Potato Max, Apple Alex, Donut Desiree. I’m Sandwich Sammy.” If the teens already are familiar with each other through community interactions, choose one of the icebreakers below.

Some additional icebreaker ideas include the following:

- If you could be a fruit or vegetable, what would you be and why?
- What is your favorite meal that your family makes?
- What would be your favorite ingredient to add to a meal?
- Invite everyone to sit in a circle. Count off in fours. Each number one is an apple, number two a pear, number three an orange, and number four is a banana. As a facilitator, call out the fruits. When an apple is called, every apple has to get up and run through the middle and switch with another apple. Each round, remove a chair. The person left standing in the middle is out. The last teen standing wins.
- Name a food you would like to try that you haven’t yet.
- If you could be a utensil or kitchen appliance, what would you be and why?
- Bring a fruit salad or veggie platter to the meeting. Have teens get up and take turns choosing an item of produce to eat. For each type of produce they choose, assign a question. For example, when a teen picks a carrot they have to say their favorite color. When they pick an apple slice, they say their favorite holiday.

ACTIVITY ONE: STORY OF SELF (25 MINUTES)

Participants will explore why they want to be a part of TFLP and what they hope to gain from the experience. They will learn what brought everyone to the space and start to find a common purpose around food in their community.

***Suggested Phrasing:** “We’re all going to put in a lot of work over the next few weeks. We’re going to learn from each other, work with each other, and engage change in our community together. To get to know each other a little bit better we’re going to share our stories of self. Stories of self help us better understand where we come from and what our role is as leaders in this group. We’ll also be able to get to know each other a little bit better.*

We are all standing in this room for different reasons. No two of us share the same support system, the same influences, motivations, skills, or experiences. Our reasons for being here are different, and there is a lot of power in those differences and in our diversity.

I want you each to take a few minutes and think about why you want to learn more about food in your community.”

- **Possible prompt:** If a friend told you about this group, that’s great. But think deeper, why did you say yes? Was there a moment in your life that made you reflect and realize this was an important issue to get involved in? Think about what brought you to that choice, your motivations, your life experiences, the moment that activated your desire to effect change in your community.

Have students pair up with the person next to them to talk about their answers and then share with the larger group. Remind the teens that this is a supportive and intentional safe space. A part of creating a safe space is acknowledging where everyone comes from, without judgement. Reiterate that everyone’s lives are different and that diversity is a big part of where strength comes from.

Prepped Material: The facilitator should post large pieces of paper around the room, each with one of the probing questions below (pick just a few to use in the session). The facilitator should then tell the students to walk around the room and write their responses to the questions on the pieces of paper. This portion of the activity should take 15 minutes.

The following are some probing questions to think about:

- Who are you?
- Where are you from?

- What are three important facts about you?
- Where is home?
- Why did you join this program?
- What is one goal you have for yourself?
- What is one goal you have for the rest of the teens in this group?
- What do you hope to gain?
- What do you hope to contribute?
- Draw your favorite dinner.
- What do you want to change about food for your family? Why?
- What types of foods do you eat and where do you get them from? Is it the type of food you want to be eating?

This can also be an opportunity to have teens do a more creative activity, like sketching. Students could do an exercise in which they draw a figure of themselves and then illustrate different aspects of their lives. For example, they could illustrate thoughts by drawing a picture near their head; something they like to do by illustrating that at their hands; something they like to eat by drawing that in their stomach; some place to go by drawing that at their feet; and someone/something they love shown at their heart.

Thank everyone for their honesty and trust. Repeat that everyone's differences make us stronger, and the only way we can effect change is by drawing from *all* of our collective tools and experiences. No one person has enough to create community change on their own.

Hand each student dot stickers and do a "gallery walk," having them go around the room and put stickers next to responses that resonate with them. Have the teens to return to their seats, turn to a partner and share their thoughts on the gallery walk.

- Ask: What surprised them? What had the most dots? Why might that be? What had the fewest dots? Why might that be? How are the experiences on the wall similar or different?

Then, come back together as a group and brainstorm values that you share, common threads that unite the group, and differences that provide strength.

ACTIVITY TWO: FOOD JUSTICE MURAL (20 MINUTES)

Now that the group knows a little more about each other, explain that you're going to create a "mural of us" around food justice.

Prepped Material:

Post this definition on the wall

“Food justice is communities exercising their right to grow, sell, and eat healthy food. Healthy food is fresh, nutritious, affordable, culturally appropriate, and grown locally with care for the well-being of the land, workers, and animals. People practicing food justice leads to a strong local food system, self-reliant communities, and a healthy environment.”

—justfood.org

Ask one of the teens to read the definition aloud. Ask the group if they are happy with that definition or if there are parts they would like to change or add to make it more applicable for their community and experiences. Paraphrase the definition if necessary to ensure comprehension.

Once you have an agreed upon definition, ask the teens to pick parts of the definition that resonate with them (e.g., “affordable” or “healthy environment”). When you have a list of these parts, ask each teen to think of one and write and/or illustrate it on a part of one large paper. Multiple teens can choose the same component. Encourage teens to include pieces from their story of self, and connections to food justice. Encourage teens to contribute poems, stories, quotes, pictures, and/or lyrics to the mural using markers, finger paints, pencils, or whatever is available to translate their reflections in the form that makes the most sense to them. Then, tape this sheet on the wall as a mural and reminder of what the group stands for and where they come from.

After they finish creating this food justice mural, ask the teens to pair up with someone new and discuss their favorite part of the mural, saying one thing about the mural that they’re excited to work on or learn more about as part of TFLP.

ACTIVITY THREE: COMMUNITY GUIDELINES (10 MINUTES)

Here, participants will set the norms for the teen space. This exercise is their opportunity to define the rules of engagement to ensure the space is safe and conducive to everyone’s needs. Take notes during this activity to reference throughout the program as interaction guidelines.

Pose the following questions:

- While we are working together, what are some rules or guidelines we should follow?
Some options for guidelines:
 - » Step up, step back. Encourage those who speak often to step back and listen, and encourage those who do not speak often to step up and contribute.
 - » Use “I” statements when possible. Do not speak for others.
 - » Be aware of our language.
 - » Check your “swag” and be vulnerable.

- » Show up on time or let the facilitator know if you'll be late.
 - » Keep phones away.
 - » Leave the space how we found it.
- How should we support each other?
 - How should we work through disagreements and mistakes?
 - How should we make decisions?
 - How should we communicate outside of the group?
 - What should we do if there is a conflict within the group?
 - What should we do if we don't understand a concept or have a question. (One option is to allow students to write their questions down anonymously, crumple them up and toss them in the middle of the room, then the facilitator can answer questions when there are a number of papers on the ground or a lull in attention.)

The resulting list of guidelines should be recorded on a large piece of paper that can be taped up in the teen space and referred to as needed. At any time during the course, guidelines can be added if the whole group agrees to the addition.

ACTIVITY FOUR: TEEN IRON CHEF SNACK BUILDER (45 MINUTES)

Divide the participants into groups of three or four. Try to split up participants sitting next to each other.

Prepped Material: Give each group an identical bag of groceries. The food provided should be food that the teens have access to at least some of the time from a store near Altgeld or the local Walmart. The following are some examples of food that the facilitator could add to each bag of groceries:

- Fruits and vegetables (sweet and savory), such as lemons, sweet potatoes, apples, and broccoli (if there is no sink, make sure the produce is washed in advance. If the teens cannot use knives, make sure that any large produce is cut in advance.)
- Staple pantry items that don't require cooking (e.g. canned chickpeas, dried fruit, raw nuts, peanut butter, crackers, bread, salt, pepper, and other dried and fresh spices if possible)
- Items that can cook in a short period of time
- Dairy items, such as milk and cheese (if there is access to a refrigerator)
- One or two mystery ingredients (e.g., curry paste, coconut milk, Worcestershire sauce, or an unfamiliar fruit or vegetable)

Provide some kitchen materials for the teens to use:

- Bowl, plate, toothpicks, utensils (both to eat with and to cook with)
- Cutting board
- Can opener (if needed)

- Rag or paper towel
- Soap and water so the teens can wash up before cooking and help clean up

Plan and Create

Split the teens into two groups. Tell the teens that, using only the materials provided, they will have 20 minutes to create a snack that represents their group.

Explain that they will have 5 minutes to orient themselves with the materials and plan a recipe and 20 minutes to make the snack. They will not be allowed to look up recipes but are encouraged to be as creative as possible. Have pens and paper ready for the planning stage.

During the planning stage, explain to the teens that they all come from different families and may have cooked food in different ways growing up. Instruct the teens to share a way that their family prepares food with the rest of their group. It may be new to the other team members. The goal of this activity is for each group to create a snack that represents the background and food experiences of all its group members. It should probe students to think about how different food can look in each family.

After the initial 5 minutes, each group will go to a separate workstation to make their snack.

- Remind groups about the community guidelines they created and be sure to enforce them.

After the 20 minutes are up, ask each group to bring their snack to the middle of the room. Let them explain how the snack represents its team members.

Clean Up and Debrief

Bring everyone back together and pose the following questions for the group to discuss while they eat their snacks. While eating, prompt the teens to notice and discuss the differences between each group's snack.

Suggested Phrasing: "Instead of starting from scratch, we are able to learn from all of the lived experiences of every member of this group. Maybe you had never eaten one of the ingredients provided today, but your team member's family had cooked it often. Seeing and making connections, whether with people, cultures, or ideas, is a hallmark of social justice workers. As we continue to meet, let's think about ways we can continue building off each other's life experiences, learning from those who came before us, and sharing our work with younger members who will come after us."

- **The following are possible prompts:** Do the dishes from each group look or taste differently? What are the similarities? How did you decide what to cook? Were these decisions influenced by the ingredients available? By the time constraints? Have you eaten all of the ingredients before? If not, which ones were new and what did you think about them? What was one thing you learned about cooking? What was the most challenging thing about this activity? Were there miscommunications? How could they have been avoided? How did people show leadership throughout this activity? If you could do this activity again, what would you do differently? What tips would you give a friend who was going to make the same dish?

CLOSE OUT (10 MINUTES)

Pluses and Deltas

This activity allows participants to share what they enjoyed about the session (pluses) and what they would change to improve the session next time (deltas). Try to frame deltas with feeling statements instead of cons. For example, saying, “I felt uncomfortable with the cooking challenge because I rarely make food with my family,” instead of saying, “I didn’t like the cooking challenge”.

Origin of the Solidarity Clap (5 minutes)

Suggested Phrasing: “The solidarity clap was developed in the 1960s out of the United Farm Workers Movement in California. This movement was powered by individuals from Mexico and the Philippines and led by Cesar Chavez and Larry Itliong.

In the fields in the 1960s, it was common for farmworkers to speak only their native language. Since workers on one farm often grew up in many different places, language barriers left little room for verbal communication between workers. But workers found a way to stand in solidarity with one another as they struggled collectively for recognition and rights.

Across barriers of language, culture, and tall cornfields, every night to signal the end of the workday a farmworker would start the solidarity clap. The clap was started by one worker at the sound of her/his heartbeat. (The facilitator should start clapping slowly on their chest at the sound of their heartbeat.) As more and more farmworkers heard the clap, they would join in. As the clap spread across the field, workers would drop their tools and join in, gaining momentum as the clap got faster and faster rumbling across the farm. (Encourage participants to join in, clapping faster and faster in unison like a “slow clap”.) After the noise had spread across the fields and everyone had a chance to join in, there would be a pause. (Give the signal for a pause.) Then there was one last, loud clap in unison. (Reach your arms out wide signaling the teens to do the same and then lead one last loud, powerful clap.) This last clap represents the

solidarity that we have with our allies and the strength of collective action. The solidarity clap is a way to show the power of diversity, the power of working together even though we come from different places, and the power to address any barriers that stand in our way. “

Session 2

What Does “Healthy” Mean?

Objectives: During this session, teens will begin to learn how to choose healthy foods, learn what calories are, practice reading food labels, and think critically about what is in their food and how it is processed. At the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- recognize what foods are healthy;
- identify terms on a nutrition facts label and use the label to make informed decisions; and
- compare nutrition facts labels.

Materials: Three poster boards, paper, pens and markers, internet enabled computer and projector, cut-out, life-size images of food, printout or projection of an example food nutrition label, and snack packaging.

WELCOME AND CHECK-IN (10 MINUTES)

Check-In Circle

Review Agenda

Icebreaker

ACTIVITY ONE: WHAT DOES “HEALTHY” MEAN ANYWAY? (20 MINUTES)

***Suggested Phrasing:** “What do we mean when we say healthy? The federal government published a list of dietary guidelines that can be a good start to tell what is healthy. Today, we will explore what it means for a food to be healthy (or healthier). Remember, sometimes a big problem is that even when we know which foods are healthier, we don’t have access to them. If someone regularly eats unhealthy food, there may be other factors going on that you don’t know about. Don’t judge anyone based on what they eat.”*

Prepped Material: Place two poster boards on opposite sides of the room. On one, write the word healthy. On the other, write the word unhealthy.

Split the teens into two groups and have one group stand in front of each poster board. Give the youth pens and ask them to brainstorm everything that comes to mind when they think of the word on the board. Provide the teens about 3 minutes to brainstorm. Then swap poster boards.

- **Here are possible prompts to use if the teens get quiet:** Is artificial sugar healthy? Is natural sugar healthy? Is kale healthy? Why? Are hot Cheetos healthy? Why? Is a chicken sandwich healthy? Why? Where do you go to buy healthy food? Where do you go to buy unhealthy food? Do you consider health when looking for a snack or meal? Why or why not? If you walk into a store and want a healthy snack or meal, how do you determine whether that food is good for you or not?

Ask a representative from each group to summarize what their poster board says.

To supplement, add in some of the following helpful tips:

Healthy:

- Colorful fruits and vegetables. Did you know that vegetables with different colors provide us with different nutrients? If we only eat broccoli and bananas, for example, we don't get the vitamins and minerals we need from orange vegetables, like carrots. The more colorful the fruits and vegetables, the more likely they are to be healthy. For example, iceberg lettuce, which is only a really light green, is less healthy than spinach which is a way more colorful deep green.
- Whole grains (**Note:** The facilitator should be prepared to provide a definition.)
- Vitamin D and calcium. Did you know that vitamin D and calcium help our bones grow? Vitamin D and calcium are especially important for teens' growing bones.
- Iron. Did you know iron helps our heart pump blood?

Unhealthy:

- Fried food.
- Overly large portion sizes. Did you know that even if we eat lots of healthy foods, if we eat too much, then it can be bad for our bodies?
- Sugary drinks like soda.
- Unbalanced diet.

ACTIVITY TWO: WHAT ARE CALORIES? (40 MINUTES)

Suggested Phrasing: "Now that we know what some healthy foods are and what some unhealthy foods are, how do we know how much to eat? Sometimes it's hard to know how much is too much. The USDA developed a tool called the MyPlate Plan. We're going to walk through the tool together but you can always look up MyPlate Plan on Google to get more information specific to you and your body or talk to me after group."

Go to the following website: <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/MyPlatePlan>

Click on the start button and explain to the youth that they are going to look up the right portion size for an example person, Dylan.

Fill in Dylan's age to be a teenager, about the median age of your group, and ask the teens to call out answers to the sex, weight, height, and physical activity questions. A dark blue box should appear with the word calories on it. Ask the teens if anyone knows what calories are.

- **If needed, supplement with the following definition:** "A calorie is a unit of measurement — but it doesn't measure weight or length. A calorie is a unit of energy. When you hear something contains 100 calories, it's a way of describing how much energy your body could get from eating or drinking it. Calories aren't bad for you. Your body needs calories for energy. But eating too many calories—and not burning enough of them off through activity—can lead to weight gain."¹

Explain that we can't avoid calories because calories give our body the energy it needs to work. Without calories, we wouldn't be able to walk, talk, or come to these group sessions. But, if we eat more calories than our body needs, we store the extra energy as fat, which can be harmful to our bodies if we have too much of it. Explain that the number in the dark blue box represents how many calories of energy Dylan needs every day to keep his body moving and shaking.

Go back to the home screen. Enter a few more examples showing the youth what happens to the number of calories Dylan needs if they started working out way more every day or if they suddenly lost 50 pounds or had a growth spurt. Explain that no two people do exactly the same thing every day. Each of us needs a different amount of energy to fuel our own different lives. It's important not to judge anyone for how much or how little we see them eat because we never know what kind of energy their body needs that day.

¹ kidshealth.org/en/kids/calorie.html.

After going through a few examples of calculating daily calories., explain that we get our energy from a lot of different food groups. The five main food groups are fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, and dairy. Ask the youth to give a few examples of foods that fit in each group. Click on the icons on the choose-my-plate.gov website for additional examples if needed.

Explain to the participants that we need to eat a balance of the food groups. We can't just get all of our calories from white bread in grains, for example, because we wouldn't have right amount of vitamins, nutrients, fats, carbohydrates, and proteins for our body to work as well as it should.

► **Optional Video:** Play this Bill Nye clip 1:06 -3:30 if the group needs more background knowledge: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3vwTdBjEiY&t=29s>

Now, click on the dark blue box with the number of calories. This website helps us find recommendations for how to split up our daily calories among the food groups.

***Suggested Phrasing:** "For this activity, we are going to split into three groups. Each group will create an example teen, calculate their daily recommended calories, and split up those calories among the food groups."*

After teens split into three groups, have each group name their example teen and answer the set of questions about their teen to calculate their recommended calorie intake. Then hand the youth a note explaining the daily recommended amounts of each food group.

Prepped Material: To prepare for this activity, cut out images of cooked food items in advance. On the back, write the serving size and which food group they belong to. For example, baked chicken, rice, apple juice, yogurt, cereal, salad etc. It is important that the photos are life size so that the youth can see exactly how much one serving is. For example, a serving of fish should be printed out at about the size of a deck of cards.

Have the youth look through the cut-out pictures of food and arrange them by food group. Ask each group to create three meals and a snack using only the recommended portion size for their example teen.

After youth are finished assembling their meals, have them share their recipes with the entire session group.

Discussion Questions:

- Did the number of calories that your example teen needed surprise you?

- Were you able to exchange the number of recommended calories into more food or less food than you thought?
- Does the size of the meal surprise you?
- Did the number of calories you were able to take from each food group surprise you?
- Did you think you would be recommended to eat more or less?

ACTIVITY THREE: PRACTICING THE 10 PERCENT RULE (30 MINUTES)

Suggested Phrasing: "Though a lot of us want to eat healthier, it's often difficult to figure out which foods are healthy and which aren't. We just learned about one way to figure out if food is healthy, which is to plan your meals on MyPlate. However, it can be tricky when we are going about our own lives to always think and count our daily servings. Now we're going to learn how to read nutrition labels, which is another good way of deciding if something is more or less healthy. Remember, sometimes a big problem is that even when we know which foods are healthier, we don't have access to them. If someone regularly eats unhealthy food, there may be other factors going on that you don't know about. Don't judge anyone based on what they eat."

Explain that every packaged food sold in the US has a label on it with nutrition facts. We can use this to help us understand whether a food is more or less healthy. Have the youth watch some of the following videos to understand food labels and nutrients. Choose the ones you feel best resonate with the literacy level and interests of your group.

- Doug Reid, "Label Reading 101," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WV_tRB0zvUI
- US Food and Drug Administration, "The Food Label and You: Game Show Review (Are You Smarter Than a Food Label?)," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DjFVOZ_ALuM

Ask the group if they have any questions and make sure that they can identify and understand the six categories in the example nutrition fact sheet below.

Nutrition Facts		
1	8 servings per container	
	Serving size	2/3 cup (55g)
2	Amount per serving	
	Calories	230
	% Daily Value*	
3	Total Fat 8g	10%
	Saturated Fat 1g	5%
	Trans Fat 0g	
	Cholesterol 0mg	0%
	Sodium 160mg	7%
	Total Carbohydrate 37g	13%
	Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
	Total Sugars 12g	
4	Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
	Protein 3g	
5	Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
	Calcium 200mg	15%
	Iron 8mg	45%
	Potassium 235mg	6%
6	* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	

Hand out a variety of packaged snacks to the group. Tell the teens to grab some snacks to look at. Go around the room and make sure that the teens are locating the right columns with their fingers, and ask teens to raise their hand to answer each question.

1. Locate the “**serving size**” and “**servings per container**” lines.
 - What is a serving size?
 - Is it important to eat the right serving size? Why?
 - How many servings are in your product? What does this mean?
2. Locate the “**% daily value**” column. Go around the room to check that they all found it.
 - What does this mean?
3. Locate the “**sugar**” row.
 - Is sugar something we want more of or less of?
 - What is the total sugar per serving? Is this less or more than 10 percent of your daily value?
 - What is the added sugar per serving?
 - Is an added sugar one of the first three ingredients? Is this less or more than 10 percent of your daily value?

4. Locate the “**fat**” row.
 - Is fat something we want more of or less of?
 - What is the total fat per serving? Is this less or more than 10 percent of your daily value?
5. Locate the “**calories**” row.
 - Are calories something we want more of or less of?
 - How many calories are in one serving of the food?
 - Is this less or more than 10 percent of your daily value?

Draw a T-chart on the board in the front of the room with one section labeled “things we want more of” and one section labeled “things we want less of.” Ask youth to name things to put on the board such as protein, carbohydrates, potassium, iron, sugar, and fat. For everything on the board, ask the youth if they know what it does to your body. Make sure that you, as a facilitator, can step in to explain how potassium, protein, iron, calcium, etc. impact our bodies. In this clip (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3vwTdBjEiY>), section 15:20-16:20 can help explain fat, 17:13-18:00 can help explain fiber, and 14:20-15:20 can help explain a complete protein. For example, by explaining that iron helps our blood bring oxygen to the body or that protein helps our body turn energy in the form of carbohydrates into energy in the form of moving our arms.

Nutrients we should try and keep below 10 percent put in the “things we want more of” column and nutrients we should try to keep above 10 percent put in the “things we want less of” column.

Discuss the columns as a group and make any adjustments that are needed if nutrients were put in the wrong column.

Next, talk about the 10 Percent Rule. The 10 Percent Rule is a quick and easy way of reading a nutrition facts label. A food is usually a good choice if

- it contains 10 percent or more of your daily value of “good” nutrients (e.g., fiber, calcium, vitamin D, iron)
- it contains 10 percent or less of your daily value of “not so good” nutrients (e.g., sugar, saturated fat, sodium)

Take the time to brainstorm “good” nutrients and “not so good” nutrients. Everyone’s body is different, so the 10 percent rule might not work the same way for everyone, just as every person has a different recommended calorie intake. The idea is that there should be more good than bad in everything we eat.

Have each group discuss the following questions and then come up to share their answers with the whole room.

- How much is in one serving of their snack?

- » Is that less or more than 10 percent of their daily value of fat, sugar, and one of the other nutrients on the board?
- Is this a healthier snack choice?
- Do you have any other tips for eating healthier options?

Debrief

For 5–10 minutes, share responses to the following questions in pairs or as a large group discussion.

- Did you learn anything today that surprised you?
- Why do you think there is no daily percentage value for total sugar?
- What is helpful about the nutrition facts label?
- What is frustrating about the nutrition facts label?

ACTIVITY FOUR: WHAT IS PROCESSED FOOD? (15 MINUTES)

Ask the teens to think about their favorite homemade family recipe. Have them write down all the ingredients and read them out loud. (**Note:** Bring in some recipes for examples.)

Now, have them name some of their favorite ready to eat junk foods that they would buy in a store. (**Note:** Have some empty unhealthy junk food snacks ready.) Ask the teens to read all the ingredients aloud. (It should be pretty difficult.)

Summarize by reiterating that, if you can't read all of the ingredients easily, it's probably processed.

Suggested Phrasing: “Processed foods are food that comes in boxes, cans, or bags ready to eat. This food usually has chemicals added to it or it goes through other chemical processes, so it can be stored in bags for long periods of time without losing its taste or rotting. Processed food also tends to have more sodium, fat, and sugar than food we make ourselves. This means that usually processed food is healthier than food that is not processed. However, that is not always the case, so you have to read the label to be sure!”

Give the following tips for eating healthier food:

- Tip #1: On a nutrition label, all of the ingredients are listed in order. The more of one ingredient, the closer to the beginning of the list it is. Buy foods for which you can identify all the ingredients for at least the first five ingredients listed.
- Tip #2: If you have freezer space, buy frozen vegetables without added sauces or butter. They are better for you than processed vegetables with additives and more

similar to fresh vegetables in nutrition, may cost less, and, without sauces or butter, should not have many added ingredients.

- Tip #3: If you make all of your own junk food, it will be healthier. For example, bake your own fries rather than buying them at a fast food joint.
- Tip #4: When possible, choose the less-processed option.
- Tip #5: Limit the added sugars, trans fats, and saturated fats that you eat.
- Tip #6: Look for food with a lot of different kinds of vitamins and minerals.

Debrief

Share the following, either in pairs or in a large group discussion.

- What are your thoughts on processed and fresh foods?
- Did you learn anything today that surprised you?
- What are some healthier alternatives to the snacks we may usually eat or see in stores?
- Where around here can we get healthier foods?
- What can we do to get healthier foods in stores?
- How can we motivate ourselves and our communities to eat healthier?

CLOSE OUT (10 MINUTES)

Pluses and Deltas (5 minutes)

This activity allows session participants to share what they enjoyed about the session (pluses) and what they would change to improve the session next time (deltas). Try to frame deltas with feeling statements instead of cons, for example, “I felt uncomfortable with the cooking challenge because I rarely make food with my family,” instead of, “I didn’t like the cooking challenge.”

Solidarity Clap (5 minutes)

Session 3

Sugar Sugar

Objectives: During this session, teens will learn how sugar is related to health and how to identify if a food has a lot of artificial sugar. At the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- recognize how much sugar is in soda,
- think critically about artificial sugar consumption and food choice, and
- understand how too much sugar affects our bodies.

Materials (assuming three groups for each activity): Internet enabled computer and projector, printout or projection of an example food nutrition label, one 20-ounce bottle of dark soda and one 20-ounce bottle of light soda, sixteen drinking glasses (fourteen empty, one containing 15.5 teaspoons of sugar for dark soda, one containing 18.5 teaspoons for light soda), a bag of white sugar (2 quarts), seven measuring teaspoons, clear plastic beads, red food dye, fruit juice, corn syrup (18 oz.), seven 20 oz. clear bottles of 100 percent fruit juice, and seven 20 oz. clear empty bottles.

Safe Space Warning: This session could arouse defensive feelings among teens around eating practices and what their family eats on a regular basis. Take extra precautions while facilitating to ensure all teens are comfortable. It is important not to single out any participants during any of the following questions or activities. This is a good time to revisit the community guidelines teens created during Session 1.



WELCOME AND CHECK-IN (10 MINUTES)

Check-In Circle

Review Agenda

Because this session talks through food choice and consequences on a personal level, this is a good time to revisit the community guidelines teens created during Session 1. After reviewing the guidelines, proceed with the warm-up and allow several minutes of feedback and discussion. It is important not to single out any participants during any of the following questions or activities.

Icebreaker



ACTIVITY ONE: SNACK BREAKDOWN (10 MINUTES)

Going around the room, have each participant use two words to describe how they feel after they eat an unhealthy snack and two words to describe how they feel after they eat a healthier snack.

Suggested Phrasing: “Last week we learned how to tell if a food is healthy. What is your favorite healthier snack? What is your favorite unhealthy snack? Remember that different people define ‘healthy’ and ‘unhealthy’ in different ways and that it is important to respect those definitions.”

Ask: “What is an added sugar?” Supplement the answer with the following explanation.

Suggested Phrasing: “Added sugars are sugars that are added to our foods during processing (like soda), preparation (like cookies), or at the table (like coffee). In this case, when we add white sugar to our food, we are just adding sugar. It doesn’t come with protein, minerals, or vitamins that our body needs. So, we are taking in refined sugar, which is not great for us, and not balancing it with anything that is good for us. Now, this is different than sugars that naturally occur in food. For example, a strawberry is sweet because it naturally has sugar. However, the sugars in strawberries interact with our bodies differently than the sugars in our cookies. The sugars in strawberries are attached to vitamins and nutrients that our bodies need. So, when we eat strawberries, we are balancing that sugar with other healthy things, making the sugar in strawberries healthier than the sugar in cookies.”

Measure out 6 teaspoons of sugar. Explain that according to the American Heart Association, this is the maximum amount of sugar that we should be eating every day to help keep our heart healthy. Ask the teens if they think this is more or less added sugar than they eat and their friends eat in a typical day.

Now, split the teens into groups of two or three, giving each group one of the empty glasses. Have each group measure the amount of sugar that it thinks is in dark soda by scooping sugar into an empty glass using a teaspoon and bag of sugar. Keep the 20-ounce dark soda bottle at the front of the room for comparison. Record the estimated amounts the groups have agreed upon.

Repeat this process for the clear soda.

When the teens are done adding sugar into the empty bottles and have agreed upon the amount of sugar they believe is in the dark soda and the clear soda, pull out the premeasured glasses to represent the actual amount of sugar in the sodas. The glass representing the dark soda should have 15.5 teaspoons sugar and the glass representing the clear soda should have 18.5

teaspoons of sugar. Pass the premeasured glasses around so teens can compare them with the glasses they filled.

Inform teens that the amount of sugar in a 20-ounce soda bottle (an average of 16 teaspoons) is already more than three times the recommended amount that teens and children should consume each day. Explain the difference between added sugar and natural sugar.

***Suggested Phrasing:** “Added sugar, like what is in soda, can be a problem. Natural sugar, like what is in a fresh apple, can be essential and good in recommended amounts. Added sugar rushes through your body all at once, which shocks your system. That’s when you get a sugar rush, and then when it leaves your body, you crash.”*

Debrief

Engage in a conversation with teens, asking the following questions:

- What is it like to see how much sugar comes in soda drinks?
- Did it surprise you that the soda contained this much sugar?
- What would happen if you had one 20-ounce soda each day?
- What else about soda is unhealthy?
- What are some healthier drinks you could have instead of soda?
 - » Are these options easy to find around here?
 - » Are these options as affordable, or even cheaper, than soda?

ACTIVITY TWO: SUGAR IN OUR BODY (40 MINUTES)

Do a brain drain of what the teens know about natural sugar and added sugar and how it impacts our bodies. Then, split the teens into groups of two or three (try to switch up the groups from the previous exercise).

Pour a few drops of red food dye in a 20-ounce clear bottle full of 100 percent fruit juice. Add a few plastic beads. Explain that the beads represent red blood cells, which are essential to our everyday functioning because they carry oxygen to our brain. Turn the bottle upside down and right side up a few times and ask the teens to notice how quickly the beads move from one end of the bottle to the other. Pass the bottle around so that the teens can try it themselves. Explain that this is how quickly oxygen can reach different parts of our body, helping us to think, breathe, and move. Shaking the bottle is what our heart does to pump the blood to different parts of our body. This

demonstration is what our veins look like when our bodies have the right amount of natural sugar. (Note: You may have to explain what a vein is depending on the level of science knowledge in the room. The following video can be used as background knowledge:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GVU_zANtroE&t=118s.)

Now, take another identical 20-ounce bottle, fill it with a few drops of red food dye and the same number of beads. Only fill it up halfway with juice this time. Explain that we are going to add corn syrup to show what happens when we eat or drink things with added sugar. Pass around the bottle and have each youth pour in about five tablespoons of corn syrup. (Note: You want the bottle to be half full of corn syrup by the end of the exercise so you may have to adjust how much youth pour in depending on the size of the bottle.) Pause after each addition to explain the changes. When there is just a little corn syrup, but the beads can still move pretty fast, explain that this is what sugar in moderation looks like. This is what happens when we eat natural sugar and some sweet treats. Our body works a little bit harder, but the blood cells can still move easily. We're still healthy. Oxygen can still get to our brain.

Once there is a lot of corn syrup (by the time it is half full of juice and half full of corn syrup), show how hard it is to have the beads move. Note how hard our heart has to pump now to move the blood through our body. This is what happens when we drink or eat too much added sugar.

Now have the youth compare how fast the beads move through the bottle that is half corn syrup compared to the bottle that is all juice. Discuss aloud the differences between the two with the participants. Additionally, share with the teens how natural sugars and added sugars have different effects on our bodies.

Suggested Phrasing: *"The beads move slower through the corn syrup, just like our red blood cells move slower when there is too much added sugar in our bodies. This makes it harder for oxygen to get to our brain and makes our hearts tired. Having our bodies work harder can lead to diseases like diabetes and heart disease.*

Natural sugar works differently than added sugar inside of our bodies. For example, when we eat an apple, which has natural sugar, the sugar is slowly released in our body, and the fiber in the apple helps to push the sugar through our blood and out. So, when we eat a candy bar, it's like we're dumping corn syrup in our body all at once. But when we eat an apple, because an apple has so many other good things in it, like fiber, which a chocolate bar doesn't have, our body responds differently. With an apple, it's like we're

releasing one drop of corn syrup at a time and constantly cleaning out the bottle and adding fresh water. That won't affect the beads the same way as eating a lot of candy bars would."

Debrief

Engage in a conversation (5–10 minutes) asking the following questions:

- How does seeing this difference make you feel?
- What are some examples of foods with added sugar?
- What are some examples of foods with natural sugar?
- Do you have any questions about the way that sugar works in our bodies?

Be prepared to explain the addictive power of sugar; the differences between added refined sugar and sugar substitutes, like stevia; and how natural sugar works to give our bodies energy. Depending on the scientific background of the students, feel free to explain as little or as much of the science behind this experiment as you feel comfortable.

Show the youth a nutrition facts label. Explain that the line we should be looking at is the line highlighted in blue that shows us the amount added sugars in our food. This line will give us a better clue as to whether the food is healthy than just the line of total sugars. This is because total sugar includes sugars from things like apples, while added sugars does not.

CLOSE OUT (5 MINUTES)

Review the Day

Ask who wants to lead check-in and pluses and deltas next time. Tell the youth to wear clothes that they can run around in comfortably for an activity next week.

Pluses and Deltas

Have a teen lead this time.

Solidarity Clap

Session 4

What the Heck Is Fat?

Objectives: During this session, teens will learn how fat is related to health and how to identify if a food has a lot of fat. Teens will also bond as a group and develop trust while jumping across lily pads. Teens will recognize how complex and interesting they are as individuals and how many of the assumptions they might have had about the other teens are false. At the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- recognize how much fat is in fast food;
- think critically about the differences between saturated, trans, and unsaturated fats and food choice; and
- understand how too much bad fat effects our bodies.

Materials: Poster board, colored markers and pens, a printout or projection of the menu options for the blubber burger activity, 2 quarts of Crisco, a hamburger bun for each teen, 7 toilet paper tubes, clay or play dough, plastic beads, and a printout or projection of an example food nutrition label.

WELCOME AND CHECK-IN (10 MINUTES)

Check-In Circle

Review Agenda

Icebreaker

ACTIVITY ONE: LILY PADS (20 MINUTES)

We are doing this activity to reinforce working and learning as a team and creating a space for collaboration and bonding.

The goal of the activity is for all team members to cross a marked area designated as the river using only the lily pads. Lily pads can be pieces of cardboard or paper or something of the sort. A successful team will get everyone across the river in as short a time as possible.

When planning for this session ahead of time, let teens know that an activity will be physical so they can prepare to wear clothes that allow them to participate comfortably. If notifying teens ahead of time isn't possible and there are youth whose movement is restricted by their clothing, shorten the jumps or provide alternate modes of passage.

The rules are as follows:

- All participants are part of the same team and must take turns crossing from one side of the river to the other.
- Once participants leave the riverbank, they are allowed to step onto the lily pads. Participants must remain in contact with lily pads at all times. Anyone who touches the river in any way will have to “pay for consequences” – either the whole team or the participant (facilitator’s choice, based on time) will need to return to the riverbank.
- Once a team member steps on a lily pad, someone must always be touching it or else it floats away. (In other words, participants have to coordinate to have someone step onto the lily pad before stepping off.)
- No running or diving. Use short leaps and strategic steps to get from pad to pad.
- The facilitator will time the group.

Optional modification 1: Do a second passing and alter sensory perception, such as adding a blindfold or telling them they can’t talk.

Optional modification 2: Do a second passing and give each participant a card with a character trait on it. Tell them to review it and not share their characteristic with the other teens. Ask teens to role play their characteristic as they cross the river. Characteristic ideas include shy, bossy, mistrustful, mute, encouraging, or confused.

Debrief

Engage in a conversation (5–10 minutes) asking the following questions:

- What components were necessary for success? (communication, careful planning, team work)
- What components made the work difficult?
- What components made the work easy?
- How could the group have completed the task more efficiently?

What lessons can you take away from this?

ACTIVITY TWO: BLUBBER BURGER (35 MINUTES)

Do a brain dump on fat and how it affects our bodies.

Present the teens with the following fast food menu options:

- Option one: burger, fries, and an Oreo milkshake
- Option two: chicken nuggets (with honey mustard and ranch), onion rings, and a blended mocha
- Option three: burrito, nachos, cinnamon bun, water

Ask each teen to pick which of the meals they'd like. 4 grams of fat = 1 tsp Crisco

- Burger, calculated based on a Burger King Whopper
- Fries, calculated based on a Burger King medium fries
- Onion rings, calculated based on a Burger King medium onion rings
- Chicken nuggets, calculated based on a McDonald's 10-piece McNuggets
- Milkshake, calculated based on a McDonald's Oreo McFlurry
- Blended mocha, calculated based on the McDonald's Oreo Frappé
- Burrito, calculated based on Taco Bell's Cheesy Sausage Burrito
- Nachos, calculated based on Taco Bell's Nachos BellGrande
- Cinnamon bun, based on Taco Bell's Cinnabon Delights

Hand each teen a bun and tell them they will measure out how much fat is in their meals. For option one, they will measure 26 teaspoons of Crisco onto their buns. For option two, measure 22 teaspoons. For option three, measure 19 teaspoons.

Debrief

Engage in a conversation asking the following questions:

- Would you eat this Crisco sandwich?
- What is it like to see how much fat is in fast food?
- Did it surprise you that the meal contained this much fat?
- What would happen if you ate this meal every day?
- What else about fast food is unhealthy?
- Is this more or less fat than is recommended in the nutrition guidelines?
- What are some healthier meals you could have with less fat?
 - » Are these options easy to find around here?
 - » Are these options as affordable, or even cheaper, than fast food?

ACTIVITY THREE: FAT IN OUR BODIES (50 MINUTES)

Explain that just like how there are good sugars (natural) and bad sugars (artificial), there are also good and bad fats. There are three main types of fats.²

- **Unsaturated fats:** These are found in plant foods and fish. These fats are good for [heart health](#), especially when they're used in place of saturated and trans fats. Unsaturated fats are found in salmon, avocados, olives, and walnuts, and vegetable oils like soybean, corn, canola, and olive oil.
- **Saturated fats:** These fats are found in meat and other animal products, such as butter and cheese. Saturated fats are also in palm and coconut oils, which are often used in

² <https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/fat.html><https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/fat.html>

baked goods you buy at the store. Eating too much saturated fat can raise blood cholesterol levels and increase the chance of getting heart disease.

- **Trans fats:** These fats are found in stick margarine. Trans fats are also found in certain foods that you buy at the store or get in a restaurant, such as snack foods, cookies and cakes, and fried foods. When you see “hydrogenated” or “partially hydrogenated” oils on an ingredient list, the food contains trans fats. Trans fats are also listed on the food label. Like saturated fats, trans fats can raise cholesterol and increase the chance of getting heart disease. Now ask the teens to name some unsaturated fats that are good for us. Answers can include salmon, nuts, olive oil etc. Additionally, ask the teens to name some saturated or trans fats that are bad for us. Answers can include chips, cookies, fried chicken, etc. We need good fat to: 1) keep us warm like blanket, 2) protect our organs like a pillow, 3) fuel our bodies as energy; and 4) help us absorb vitamins.

Suggested Phrasing: “Did you know our brains are about 60 percent fat? We need good fats to keep our brains working well. Did you know that fat cushions the palms of our hands and soles of our feet? Think how painful it would be if we had no fat on our feet and were walking on just bones all the time. It would be like hitting your funny bone with every step.”

After you explain the two types of fats, split the teens into groups of two or three. Explain that they are now going to learn how bad fat interacts with our bodies like we learned how sugar interacts with our bodies. (**Note:** Be prepared to explain as little or as much of the science behind this experiment as you feel comfortable.)

First, have each group take a toilet paper tube and hold it over the empty bowl. Now, ask another team member to pour a handful of beads into the tube. Again, the beads are our red blood cells, but now the tube is our artery, instead of the bottle being a vein. (**Note:** The facilitator might have to explain the difference between an artery and a vein depending on the science level of the youth.)

Now, have each member take turns adding bits of clay or play dough to the inside of the tube. After each piece of clay is added, pour the beads again. The clay represents fat. When we eat too much fat, it sticks to the sides of our veins and arteries. Stop again after a few times adding small bits of clay, the beads still have an easy time making it to the bowl.

Suggested Phrasing: “This is what happens when we eat fat in moderation. Now notice how when too much fat sticks to our arteries it becomes difficult for the beads to pass through as quickly. (The inside of the tubes should start taking on an hourglass appearance.) Now there is less room in our arteries and it takes longer for the red blood cells to get through, like when they close a lane on a road and there’s a traffic jam. When our blood cells take longer to get through our bodies, our heart has to work much harder to pump blood, trying to make the blood move faster. When our bodies have to work harder, this can lead to health problems like diabetes, stroke, and heart disease.”

Explain that the nutrition facts label below separates out the bad fats into the yellow box. Whether there is a lot of saturated fat and trans fat will give us a better clue as to whether the food is healthy than just looking at total fat. This is because total fat includes some of the healthy fats we need from things like nuts and salmon. Explain that to keep our heart healthy, the American Heart Association recommends that we eat this much (show half a teaspoon of Crisco) *trans* fat each day, and only this much (show two and a half teaspoons of Crisco) *saturated* fat each day.

Nutrition Facts	
1	8 servings per container Serving size 2/3 cup (55g)
2	Amount per serving Calories 230
	% Daily Value*
3	Total Fat 8g 10% Saturated Fat 1g 5% Trans Fat 0g
	Cholesterol 0mg 0% Sodium 160mg 7% Total Carbohydrate 37g 13% Dietary Fiber 4g 14% Total Sugars 12g
4	Includes 10g Added Sugars 20%
	Protein 3g
5	Vitamin D 2mcg 10% Calcium 200mg 15% Iron 8mg 45% Potassium 235mg 6%
6	* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Debrief

Engage in a conversation (5–10 minutes) asking the following questions:

- How does this make you feel?
- What are some examples of foods with a lot of fat?
- Do you have any questions about the way that fat works in our bodies?
- Do you think teens in your community typically eat more than the recommended amount of bad fats?

CLOSE OUT (5 MINUTES)

Review the Day

Ask for two teen volunteers to lead an icebreaker at the start of the next meeting. As we transition to the action project, the teens will plan more of the activities. Provide a few examples of icebreaker games, if needed.

Identify who wants to lead check-ins and who wants to lead pluses and deltas.

Pluses and Deltas

Solidarity Clap

Optional Session

Cooking Demo

Objectives: During this session, teens will learn some basic knife skills, how to shop on a budget, and how to cook some simple healthy food. At the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- Think critically about food choice while shopping;
- Make a healthy dip; and
- Cut, roast, and/or steam vegetables.

Materials: Ingredients to make healthy dips, and whole grain chips and/or vegetables, vegetables to steam/roast, seasonings, utensils, cut out images of ingredients that can be found at a local grocery store, and internet enabled computer and projector.

Note: The curriculum objectives can be met without this session. However, if the tools are available, it can be empowering to provide teens with some tools to cook for themselves after learning about healthy eating. Make sure that all ingredients purchased are affordable things that the teens can easily access, preferable near Altgeld.

WELCOME AND CHECK-IN (10 MINUTES)

Check-In Circle

Review Agenda

Icebreaker

ACTIVITY ONE: COOKING DEMO (70 MINUTES)

Choose a few of the delicious dips and spreads below.³ Ask the teens to vote on their favorites and take the recipes home. It can be fun to do a blindfolded taste test where the teens have to guess the ingredients in each one.

³ <http://cookingmatters.org/sites/default/files/CMYC.pdf>.

Delicious Dips & Spreads

Pair your favorite fruits, veggies, and whole grains with easy-to-make dips.

If you do not have a blender, use a fork to mash more solid ingredients. Then, blend with other ingredients using a mixing spoon.

Bean Dip

- Using a blender, mix 1 (15½-ounce) can beans (cannellini, chickpeas, black beans, etc.) rinsed and drained, 1 minced garlic clove, ¼ cup water, 1 Tablespoon canola oil, ½ teaspoon salt, ½ teaspoon ground black pepper.
- For extra kick, add ¼ cup salsa. For a thicker dip, add ¼ cup low-fat yogurt. For a different flavor, add ¼ cup of your favorite rinsed and minced fresh herbs.
- Serve with cutup fresh veggies, with whole wheat pita wedges or crackers, or as a sandwich spread.

Pumpkin Dip

- Using a blender, mix 1 (15-ounce) can pumpkin puree, 1 cup low-fat cream cheese (softened), ½ cup powdered sugar, 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon, and ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg.
- Serve with whole wheat graham crackers or apple wedges. Or use as a spread on whole wheat toast or bread.

Honey Mustard Dip • Chef Bob Casey, Boston, Mass.

- Mix ½ cup plain nonfat yogurt, 1 Tablespoon mustard, and 1 Tablespoon honey.
- Serve with baked chicken fingers or soft whole grain pretzels.

Ricotta Fruit Dip

- Mix 8 ounces low-fat ricotta cheese, ½ cup nonfat vanilla yogurt, 3 Tablespoons of your favorite fruit preserves or jam, and ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon.
- Serve with cutup fresh fruit or whole wheat crackers. Or use as a spread on whole wheat toast, bread, or pancakes.

Vegetable Dip • Chef Alicia McCabe, Boston, Mass.

- Mix ½ cup nonfat plain yogurt, ½ cup reduced-fat mayonaisse, and 1 Tablespoon Mrs. Dash seasoning (or use ½ teaspoon each of dried chives and parsley, ¼ teaspoon each of garlic and onion powder, and ¼ teaspoon each of salt and pepper). Use low-fat sour cream in place of mayonaisse if you like.
- Serve with cutup fresh veggies. Or use as a topping for quesadillas, tacos, or chili.

Fruit Yogurt Dip

- Using a blender, mix 1 cup low-fat cream cheese (softened), ½ cup nonfat vanilla yogurt, ½ cup fruit puree — such as crushed pineapple, berries, or mashed banana — 1 teaspoon honey, and ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon.
- Serve with cutup fresh fruits. Try apples, bananas, grapes, or strawberries.

Before starting, have the teens separate all of the ingredients into their food groups and explain why ingredients are healthy or unhealthy. If you have access to a stove or oven, show teens how to lightly steam and/or roast vegetables such as eggplant, string beans, squash, etc. Then invite teens to apply seasonings to their own serving to try out what might be new flavors such as oregano, curry powder, rosemary, etc. Be sure to review safe knife handling and how to properly store food if using this option.

These can be great resources:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yT9qXSVZUI8>
- <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/teach-others/download-materials/for-kids-and-teens>

Another option is to pick a recipe from one of these resources the week before and prepare it together. This allows the teens to learn to follow a recipe.

- <https://www.cookinglight.com/food/everyday-menus/healthy-budget-recipes#stewed-pork-squash-recipe>
- <https://www.budgetbytes.com/>
- http://cookingmatters.org/sites/default/files/Meeting_Your_MP_Goals_on_a_Budget_FINAL.pdf

ACTIVITY TWO: SHOPPING ON A BUDGET (35 MINUTES)

Explain that shopping for healthy food on a budget can be really hard.

Layout cutout images of various items you buy at a grocery store. Make sure that these are items that the participants would easily be able to find. Make sure that the pictures do not include prices. Ask the teens to go shopping for two days (six meals) worth of healthy groceries by choosing the images on the table. Explain that everyone has a budget of \$15.

After 2-3 minutes, ask the teens to come to the checkout counter (your space in the room). Price each teen's goods and let them know if they are over/under budget and by how much. Make sure you are using prices that are similar to the prices at grocery stores near Altgeld. Alternatively, provide the teens with a list of prices and have them add the totals of their baskets themselves.

Have each teen present for 1-2 minutes on the price of their basket, why they chose their items, and why the food is healthy. After all the youth present, start a group discussion recommending tweaks for what could be healthier and/or cheaper.

- **Possible Prompts:** Is this more or less food than you thought you could buy for \$15? Are all of the food groups represented in your bag? What is a healthy breakfast meal you can make with the ingredients in your bag? What is a healthy lunch meal you can make with the ingredients in your bag? What is a healthy dinner meal you can make with the ingredients in your bag? What is one ingredient you can use for breakfast, lunch, and dinner? [Explain that one way to shop on a budget is to buy a few different ingredients every week and use those ingredients in a lot of different ways. For example, you could use black beans in a breakfast tortilla, black bean soup, black bean dip for chips, or chicken salad. Buying black beans in bulk is a great investment!] Which food groups are the most expensive? What are cheap ways to eat food in that food group?

Explain that there are ways to make eating healthy more affordable. Some tips include:

- Only buy fresh fruit when it's in season. Otherwise stick to frozen or canned fruits (make sure it is canned in juice).
- Complementary proteins like beans and rice can be a healthy option to serve as the protein food group and are often cheaper than animal protein like steak.
- Look at ingredients to tell if something is high quality, not brand name. Sometimes the store brand can be healthier and cheaper than the name brand.

Optional

- When you have some extra money, buy in bulk or stock up on seasonings that can help turn some pantry ingredients into a yummy meal.⁴

Ask the teens if anyone would change any of the ingredients in their basket after talking about it together.

CLOSE OUT (5 MINUTES)

Review the Day

Pluses and Deltas

Solidarity Clap

⁴ http://cookingmatters.org/sites/default/files/Meeting_Your_MP_Goals_on_a_Budget_FINAL.pdf

Session 5

Our Food System

Objectives: During this session, teens will further develop their preliminary knowledge of the institutions and actors in the broader food system and how food travels from production through distribution to consumption. At the end of this session, the participants will be able to:

- identify the main stakeholders in the food system;
- understand the flow of food, money, and resources throughout the system; and
- begin to think about the impact of power and privilege on the food system.

Materials: Internet enabled computer and projector, food production chain poster or projection, poster board, markers, and printouts/projections or samples of highly-processed food and unprocessed food after several months.

WELCOME AND CHECK-IN (10 MINUTES)

Check-In Circle

Review Agenda

Icebreaker

ACTIVITY ONE: BETWEEN THE LINES (30 MINUTES)

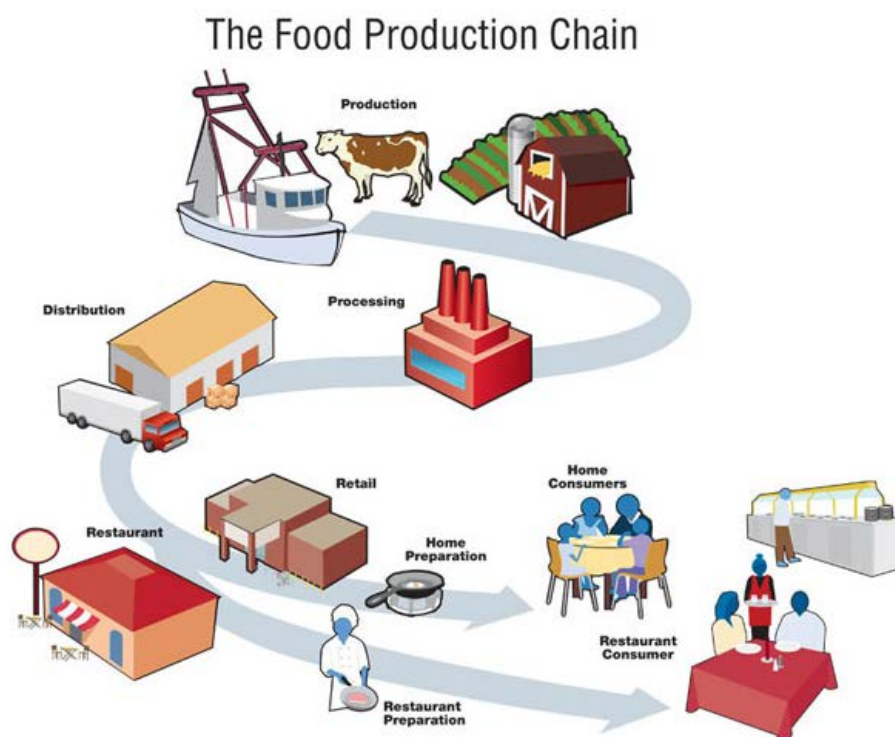
***Suggested Phrasing:** “Over the past few weeks we’ve talked about what’s in our food and how it impacts our bodies. Now we are going to talk a bit about where our food comes from. Does anyone know where our food comes from? (Note: Answer should be a farm, garden, etc.) Great! What happens after the food is grown on the farm (and/or raised on a ranch/caught in the ocean)?”*

Have the teens walk you through what they know about the food chain as you draw the different parts on the poster/board. Explain that the teens have just created a food chain. A food chain is made up of different links like farms and restaurants. Every link is a different step in between the soil and the food in our stomachs.

Hand out the “food production chain” picture (provided below) and walk the teens through the food production chain presented. Have groups share their thoughts on the following questions:

- What is missing from this production chain?
- What are words that we associate with each section of the chain? For example, maybe production = farm work; restaurant = expensive; home preparation = too much time; processing = too confusing and not sure what happens.
- What resources are needed at each section of the chain? For example, soil and seeds for production; gas for distribution.
- What questions do we have about different parts of the production chain?

Have everyone come back together and share as a large group.



ACTIVITY TWO: LIFE CYCLE OF FOOD (50 MINUTES)

Suggested Phrasing: “This group is all about food justice. Food justice is more than the types of food we put in our bodies, it is also about how our food is grown, how it’s transported to us, how we’re able to buy it, and how we throw it away. Think about an apple. There are many steps between how that apple is grown and

the core we throw away. Part of food justice is making sure that the food system is fair to customers and producers at each step of the food chain."

To make it more interactive, have the six stations of the chain (farm, processing, distribution, grocery, table, and trash) labeled as stations around the room with boards or posters to write on. Split the youth into six groups, one at each station. Ask each group to draw something on the board at their station representing that stage of the food system. After only a minute, ask them to move to the next station. Then, ask the groups to continue adding to the picture on the board at their station. After a minute, switch to the next station. Then, at the end, ask the group at each station to describe the whole picture. It should be kind of like the game telephone, where the pictures could grow into something unexpected by the end.

Go over the following prompts together, making sure that youth fully understand the food chain:

Farming

- Think about what farmers choose to grow. What do you think influences the choices that farmers make about what to grow?
- Think about where farmers get their seeds and what they use to fertilize their soil. Do they use chemicals that can harm bees and birds nearby? Or chemicals that can harm their workers?
- Think about how farmworkers are hired, paid, and respected.

Processing

- Think about what processing plants add to food. Sometimes processing plants just clean our food and then ship it to stores. However, sometimes they cover the food in chemicals, store it, clean it, and process it into fast food, snacks, or other packaged products.
- Processing includes every step of taking ingredients and turning them into prepared foods, like frozen pizza or salsa.
- The reason an unopened juice box will last longer than an apple is that it has preservatives that were added, making it a processed food. Some preservatives are natural like adding salt to beef and smoking it to make beef jerky. Beef jerky can stay on our shelves much longer than raw beef because it is preserved. There are also chemical food preservatives like benzoates and nitrates that are used in processed foods we find packaged in stores. These chemicals may be harmful to our body if we eat too many of them. But, like most things, in moderation preservatives are usually ok.

Distribution

- Think about where our food is grown. Have you seen a watermelon vine in Chicago? Have you seen a watermelon in the supermarket? How do watermelons get to Chicago? How about oranges from Florida? How does coffee from Rwanda get here?
- One thing that is necessary when our food is travelling so far is that we preserve it for its journey. Food that comes from far away usually has more preservatives added in the processing stage than food that comes from our neighborhood farmers market. This is so that food from far away stays fresh while it travels.

Grocery

- Think about how much money different types of food cost. How does an apple in your neighborhood compare to the cost of a bag of chips?
- What kinds of food can you find in your community?
- What kinds of food stores are there in your community?
- Why is this?
- Do you think there are different grocery stores in better-off neighborhoods than poor neighborhoods? What about differences between black neighborhoods and white neighborhoods? What about neighborhoods with a lot of residents who are immigrants?

Table

- Think about what we do with our food when we bring it home.
- Do we spend a lot of time cooking?
- Do we eat fresh food that doesn't have to be heavily prepared like an apple?
- Do we eat food out of a package? Why? Why not?
- Do we go out to eat a lot? Why? Why not?

Trash

- What does it mean when food goes bad or spoils?
 - » Explain that this is because as food gets older, micro-organisms such as bacteria and yeast start to break down the food causing it to rot.
- What are some things we can do to stop food from spoiling?
 - » Put it in the refrigerator. Yeast and bacteria need heat to grow so the cold of the freezer slows down their ability to break down our food.
 - » Applying preservatives.
- Think about how much food we throw away. What do we do with our leftovers? Does our trash become compost or is it thrown into a landfill?
- Compost is one way to recycle our food. The microorganisms that cause our food to break down can also be really good for the soil and provide new plants with the nutrients they need to grow.

ACTIVITY THREE: APPETITE FOR CHANGE (25 MINUTES)

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PqgU3co4vcl>

Ask some of the following questions:

- Do you think the teens in this community in Minneapolis live in a place similar to Altgeld? Why? Why not?
- What do you think the teen meant who said, “look at what they feeding y’all that’s what’s really killing us”? Do you agree?
- The teens in the video talked a lot about heavily processed foods like Popeyes and Hot Cheetos. Why are processed foods usually unhealthy? Answers should include added chemicals, bad fats, bad sugars.
- What do you think the teens meant by “fake food”? What are some examples of “fake food” here in Altgeld?

Show the teens the image of a burger (below) as an example of “fake food.” Explain that with the amount of preservatives and chemicals added to a Happy Meal so that it is cheap to cook, fast to cook, and doesn’t spoil. A Happy Meal looks almost the same almost 5 years after it was cooked.

- **Possible Prompts:** Would a 100 percent beef patty last this long? How about bread? After bread sits on the shelf for a month or two, a lot of times it develops mold. Have you seen this? Why don’t you think this hamburger bun hasn’t developed mold?

Prepped Material: It can be impactful if you bring in strawberries or fruit that has been out of the fridge for a week or two to show the level of spoilage in comparison to the happy meal.

- What do the teens in this video think about processed food? Do you relate?
- What did the teens in this video do instead of eating processed foods? Do you think this would work in Altgeld?



CLOSE OUT (5 MINUTES)

Review the Day

Identify who wants to take on the following roles next time (icebreaker, check-in, pluses and deltas, leading the solidarity clap).

Pluses and Deltas

Solidarity Clap

Session 6

What Is Food Insecurity?

Objectives: During this session, teens will learn how food insecurity is defined, talk about hunger, and brainstorm how to create a more food-secure community. At the end of this session, the participants will be able to:

- define food insecurity, in the context of their lives, the lives of their peers and community, and the greater society;
- understand some of the main facts and myths surrounding food insecurity;
- develop tools to notice and combat food insecurity in their community; and
- identify factors that lead to food insecurity and brainstorm how to break down these barriers.

Materials: Hunger and Poverty Fact Sheet handouts for either option 1 or option 2, star stickers, poster board, markers, and masking tape.

WELCOME AND CHECK-IN (10 MINUTES)

Check-In Circle

Review Agenda

Icebreaker

ACTIVITY ONE: WHAT DOES HUNGER LOOK LIKE? (40 MINUTES)

Setup

Explain that in last week's session, you talked about the food system. Ask the participants to remind you what the different parts of the food system are. Does the food system work well for everyone? Does everyone in the world have the same access to nutritious, quality food? Have the group make a list of reasons for their answers on the board.

Answers could include:

- Healthy foods can be expensive.
- They don't have time to cook and packaged foods usually have high added sugar and bad fats and not enough vitamins and minerals.
- There's not enough healthy food near where I live.
- They don't know how to cook healthy food.

Suggested Phrasing: “These are all great answers that we will talk about over the next few weeks. Now that we know more about how our bodies work, we are going to talk about some of the reasons why people don’t always have enough food to fuel their bodies and what happens when there’s not enough food. Some people that don’t always have enough food are food insecure. As a basic definition, USDA defines food insecurity as, “lacking consistent access to enough quantity and variety of food for an active, healthy life.” This means that people who are food insecure sometimes worry that the food they bought will not last, that they will not be able to afford healthy food, that they have to only eat small meals or skip meals, and/or that they will have to choose between buying food and other important things. It is important to remember that there are a lot of reasons for food insecurity that are embedded in our society. Being food insecure is not bad. It just means that someone is in a tough situation at the moment. There are a lot of reasons why some people might be food insecure. Can you think of any? (Wait for youth responses. Reasons may include lack of community resources due to racism and/or low income level, lack of jobs in the community, unstable and low-paying jobs, and lack of affordable places to shop in the community.) It is important not to judge anyone for being food insecure.”

Invite teens to count off to three to form teams and to go with their teams to different locations in the room. Choose from an option below based on the youth’s comfort level with reading maps, graphs, and statistics. Option two is more powerful and should be used if youth understand basic graphing skills.

Option 1

Prompt teens to read an excerpt of the Map the Meal Gap 2018 Executive Summary ([found on Feeding America’s website](#)) below aloud with their team. Have teens note with a star or circle the facts they have strong reactions to (e.g., things they think are interesting, false, scary).

Ask each team to pick a representative to share the facts they noted. Write the facts on a board or poster. Each group should get two minutes to present. When each group is done presenting, repeat the highlights that are on the board.

Option 2

Have a few blank pie charts and bar graphs that mirror the facts on the Map the Meal Gap 2018 Executive Summary. Have youth color in what they think the answers are. For example, have a circle that says percentage of households that are food insecure in the United States, and have them

color in the percentage that they guess. Then give handouts with the graphs filled in and have them compare. Ask each team to talk about what was surprising. Some example facts include:

- The USDA estimates that 41 million people, including nearly 13 million children in the United States, are food insecure as of 2016.
- \$3.00 is the national average meal cost. It is nearly twice this in some counties.
- Food insecurity ranges from 4 percent in Loudoun County in Virginia to 36 percent in Jefferson County in Mississippi.
- Los Angeles County is home to more than 1 million food-insecure people.⁵

Discussion Questions:

- Is food security different in our community than in other parts of Chicago? Urban areas compared with rural areas? Other cities in the US like New York City? Is food security different in the US compared with other countries?
- Where do we find food insecurity?
- Is food insecurity something happening in this community?
- Does food insecurity look different for grown-ups, teenagers, and younger kids?
- Do you think food insecurity is higher in Altgeld Gardens than in America overall?
- Do you think food insecurity is higher, lower, or about the same among teens when compared with older adults in Altgeld Gardens?
- Do you think that the rate of food insecurity is too high in America?

ACTIVITY TWO: WHAT IS FOOD INSECURITY? (40 MINUTES)

Prepped Material: Using masking tape, lay out a scale on the floor (or wall), with the extremes labeled as “strongly agree” and “strongly disagree” and the middle labeled as “I don’t know.”

Safe Space Warning: Before beginning, reiterate that this is safe a space where no one will be ridiculed for their opinions. The purpose of this activity is to understand the current views everyone as a starting point for future discussions and growth. This isn't a competition or an opportunity to prove people wrong.

Game

Instruct participants to listen to each statement and then silently walk to the point on the scale that represents their opinion.

⁵ <https://www.feedingamerica.org/sites/default/files/research/map-the-meal-gap/2016/2016-map-the-meal-gap-all-modules.pdf>

Suggested Statements

(Note: If there are statements that will not speak to the teens, don't use them. If there are statements you'd like to add, please do.)

- If people don't have enough money for food, it is probably because they are wasting their money on other things.
- The world produces enough food to go around.
- There is no hunger in my community.
- In our financial position, my family will never go hungry.
- If I could, I would give up some of my own food or wealth to ensure that others did not go hungry.
- It is the responsibility of individuals, faith communities, and charities to help those who are hungry.
- It is the responsibility of the government to help those who are hungry.
- The government should do more to help those who are poor or hungry.
- People are hungry and poor because the rich have more than their fair share.

During the activity, write the statements on a board that yield the greatest division or that include many people congregating in one spot.

Debrief

Engage in a conversation (5–10 minutes) asking the following questions:

- How did you feel about expressing your feelings around hunger and poverty in front of other people?
- Were you ever hesitant to share your opinion?
- When you were making your decision, where did that information come from?
- Were you surprised at your peers' reactions to any questions?
- Were you surprised at any questions that there was a split opinion? Why? Why not?
- Were you surprised at any questions that everyone agreed to? Why? Why not?

ACTIVITY THREE: CHANGE IS POSSIBLE (25 MINUTES)

Prepped Material: Separate a whiteboard/ blackboard/large piece of paper into two sections. On one half, have youth write/draw what food insecurity looks like in their community. On the other half, have the youth write/draw what food security looks like in their community.

Suggested Phrasing: *"It's important to remember that we can always take action to move our communities from one side of the paper to the other. Just because a friend, a neighbor, a parent etc. might be facing food insecurity today doesn't mean it will always be that way. There are steps that we can take to change our*

Session 6

communities for the better. That's what this group is about. Before we break for the day let's go around and say one thing we hope for our food system so that we can reduce food insecurity in Altgeld."

Make a list of these dreams on the board.

CLOSE OUT (5 MINUTES)

Review the Day

Identify who wants to take lead in the following activities next time (icebreaker; check-in; pluses and deltas; leading the solidarity clap).

Pluses and Deltas

Solidarity Clap

Session 7

Food Deserts

Objectives: During this session, teens will further develop their knowledge of food insecurity and explore how systemic factors can limit affordability, accessibility, and availability of certain foods and impact health and equity. At the end of this session, the participants will be able to:

- define a food desert and think critically about food deserts,
- identify different factors that lead people to their food choice, and
- explore the intersection of food choice and a healthy diet.

Materials: Seltzer, fresh or frozen fruit or fruit juice, popcorn kernels and spice mixtures, masking tape, community or city map, markers, internet enabled computer and projector, poster board, printout of the USDA map of food deserts for Chicago or Altgeld, and a printout or projection of MyPlate.

WELCOME AND CHECK-IN (10 MINUTES)

Check-In Circle

Review Agenda

Icebreaker

ACTIVITY ONE: HEALTHIER CHOICES (15 MINUTES)

Bring in seltzer and fresh or frozen fruit or fruit juice (try to find some with natural sugars only). Have the kids mix their own sodas as a healthy alternative to sugar beverages. Also, pop some popcorn kernels and have different spice mixtures the kids can put on as an alternative to bagged popcorn.

ACTIVITY TWO: OPINION GAME (20 MINUTES)

(**Note:** this link <https://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/desert%20stats.pdf> is a good resource for facilitators, and the statistics listed on this website are good to bring up in conversation if teens are curious.)

Prepped Material: Using masking tape, lay out a scale on the floor (or wall), with the extremes labeled as "strongly agree" and "strongly disagree" and the middle indicating "I don't know."

Safe Space Warning: Before beginning, reiterate that this is safe a space where no one will be ridiculed for their opinions. The purpose of this activity is to understand the current views everyone holds and to use those as a starting point. This isn't a competition or an opportunity to prove people wrong.

Game

Instruct participants to listen to each statement and then silently walk to the point on the scale that represents their opinion. Talk with the other students who chose to stand by the same sign and discuss your position. One group at a time, have someone share your group's position with the larger group. If you agree more with another group after hearing their position, feel free to switch corners. If you switch corners, be ready to defend your choice.

Suggested Statements

- It's easy to eat healthy food.
- Limited access to a supermarket can be linked to obesity and diabetes.
- Supermarket chains should be forced to build in urban and rural areas, not just suburban areas.
- Good supermarkets with healthy affordable foods are only in rich neighborhoods.
- Good supermarkets with healthy affordable foods are only in White neighborhoods.
- Even if you have money in Altgeld, it can be hard to get all the healthy food our families need.⁶

ACTIVITY THREE: FOOD DESERTS (40 MINUTES)

Ask someone to define food insecurity based on last week and engage in a small discussion on the topic.

- Possible Prompts: Are there certain places where families experience more food insecurity? What are these places like?

Explain that some of these places are food deserts. Explain that food deserts are places where

- accessibility to sources of healthy food are limited, as measured by distance to a store or by the number of stores in an area;
- individual-level resources that may affect accessibility are limited, such as family income or vehicle availability; and
- neighborhood-level indicators of resources are limited, such as the average income of the neighborhood and the availability of public transportation.

⁶ Adapted from Teaching Tolerance. N.D. Food Deserts: Causes, Consequences and Solutions. <https://www.tolerance.org/lesson/food-deserts-causes-consequences-and-solutions>.

Ask the participants what the difference is between food insecurity and a food desert?

- **Possible Prompts:** Is everyone in a food desert food insecure? What about if you live in an area with no grocery stores and high poverty rates, but you have a nice car and work in the loop of Chicago? Do you live in a food desert? Are you food insecure? What if you live in the loop of Chicago and there's a grocery store three blocks away, but you broke your leg and can't get there and you can't afford the food that they offer? Do you live in a food desert? Are you food insecure? Do you think Altgeld Gardens is in a food desert? Why? Why not?

Have the teens split into groups and give each one the same map of their community or city. Have them draw a circle around the parts they think are in food deserts.

Discuss:

- What did you think about when deciding what was a food desert?
 - » Transportation and bus lines
 - » Grocery store locations
 - » Type of grocery stores available
 - » Do grocery stores nearby take EBT/food stamps
 - » Income

There are multiple agencies in the federal government that have responsibility for our food system, some that are focused on health and food safety and some on agriculture and programs that help people afford food. Explain that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has its own definition of a food desert which to them means an area with low access to food and low income. Now, let's compare our maps to the USDA maps.

Prepped Materials: Print out the USDA's "Food Access Research Atlas" (<http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas.aspx>) map of food deserts for your city or community.

Suggested Phrasing: "The pink area of this map represents those with low access to food. This means that at least 33 percent of people in that area live more than 1 mile from a supermarket in urban areas and 10 miles from a supermarket in rural areas. The purple area of this map represents those with low incomes. This means that at least 20 percent of people in that census tract live below the poverty level. The green area of this map represents those areas that are low access and low income. This is how the USDA defines food deserts."

Make sure that the definition of a supermarket/large grocery store is clear and that a corner store does not qualify. You may also need to explain what a census tract is; it is roughly the size of a neighborhood, usually includes a few thousand people, and is an area that government agencies define for counting and studying populations.

Divide the teens into three separate groups and ask for a volunteer to record the group's conversation on a large piece of paper. (**Note:** If using cofacilitators, this is a good opportunity to have a cofacilitator lead each small group discussion.) Pose the following questions:

- Were there any differences between your map and the USDA map? Why do you think that is?
- Should a low-access, high-income neighborhood be considered a food desert?
- Should a high-access, low-income neighborhood where food is expensive and not fresh be considered a food desert?
- How can communities respond to living in a food desert?

After the three groups discuss and write a few items down on their paper, bring the groups back to a larger discussion and share the conversations.

Ask the group if they remember the Appetite for Change video. Discuss if those teens living in a food desert? Ask them for reasons why and reasons why not.

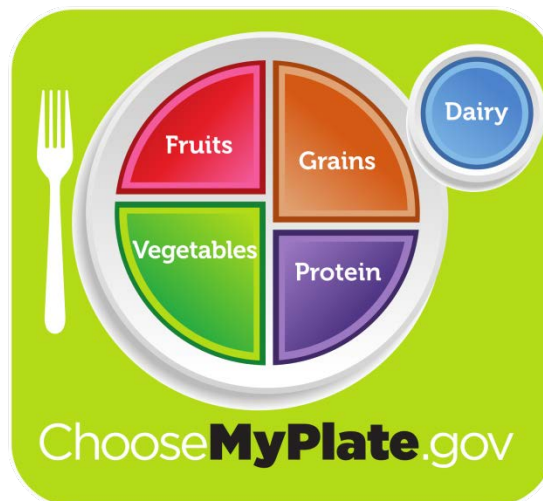
Remind the group that there are differences between food insecurity and food deserts. Food insecurity is a household condition, although lots of households in an area can be food insecure. The idea of food deserts is about place—what do the resources in the neighborhood look like? Not everyone in a food desert is food insecure, and not everyone who is food insecure lives in a food desert.

ACTIVITY FOUR: IDEAL FOOD COMMUNITY (35 MINUTES)

Ask the youth what the opposite of a food desert is? Brainstorm what that looks like.

► **Possible Prompt:** If we had a million dollars and a car, what would we eat every day?

On a large piece of paper in the front of the room, draw a big circle to represent 'my plate'. On the side, write the different food categories: fruit, vegetable, protein, grain, dairy. Ask the students to help you fill them in, creating a pie chart based on how they consume their typical plate of food without telling them the real USDA recommendations for portions. After the students finish filling out the blank 'my plate' activity, show them the following 'my plate' image and discuss any differences between this plate and theirs.



Source: "Choose My Plate," USDA, last modified April 19, 2017, <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/teens>.

- **Possible Prompts:** What looks different from the food we eat and the USDA plate? Do you think we can get a balanced diet of protein, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals from the plates you drew? How about the MyPlate? Do you think youth in the community eat this way? Why or why not?

Write key words from this discussion on a board at the front of the room.

Debrief

Ask the youth if they have any questions about food security, food deserts, what healthy food means, or anything else that you all have talked about together so far?

CLOSE OUT (5 MINUTES)

Review the Day

Identify who wants to take on the following roles next time (icebreaker, check-in, pluses and deltas, leading the solidarity clap).

Pluses and Deltas

Solidarity Clap

Session 8

Food Choice

Objectives: During this session, teens will round out their knowledge of the food system by exploring food choice, identity, and the power of teen leadership to combat systemic problems within the food system. At the end of this session, the participants will be able to:

- think critically about the consequences resulting from shifts in the food system;
- explain how individual characteristics and food choice influence interactions with the food system; and
- further recognize systemic problems within the food system and teen-founded solutions.

Materials: Food production chain poster or projection, markers, poster board, paper, internet enabled computer and projector, and copies of the Action for Change worksheet.



WELCOME AND CHECK-IN (10 MINUTES)

Check-In Circle

Review Agenda

Icebreaker



ACTIVITY ONE: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES (35 MINUTES)

***Suggested Phrasing:** “We’ve learned about the food system. And we’ve learned about food deserts and food insecurity. Now, we are going to talk about how some changes in the food system can create more equality leading to fewer food deserts and less food insecurity and about how some changes in the food system can create more inequality leading to more food deserts and more food insecurity.”*

Put a refresher picture of the food system on the wall. Ask the youth about changes that they could make at any part of this picture that would make the food system more equal. Write down the answers. Be sure to prompt about why a change will happen.

Ask the participants about changes that they could make at any part of this picture that would make the food system less equal? Write down the answers. Be sure to prompt why a change will happen. Divide group into two teams: Causes and Consequences.

- Present different food production shifts that could change the food production chain model.
- After each shift is read, each group will sit around a table to develop their response and then share with the room. Feel free to add different shifts that reflect what is currently happening in the community or take away shifts that will not resonate with the teens.
 - » The *causes group's* objective is to present why a certain scenario happens. What could have caused the shift? What part of the food system did it affect? Did someone want more money? Did someone want political power? Did someone want to create positive community change?
 - » The *consequences group's* objective is to present how the scenario impacts the food production chain and at what part of the picture. Will this shift make the system more equal or less equal? Who will it effect?

Have each group elect one writer and one reader to record the group's discussion and present to the overall class after deliberations.

Shifts

1. All the grocery stores in a community close.
2. A group of teenagers gets together and starts building a garden at their school to grow and sell fruits and vegetables to their neighbors.
3. The school decides to buy school lunches from a different company. The new company is cheaper, but it doesn't provide balanced meals and sometimes the food is frozen when it is served.
4. A bus line shuts down that used to lead to major stores like Jewel and Walmart.
5. A company develops a chemically treated seed for growing tomatoes that makes the tomatoes grow bigger and need less water and weeding than traditional organic seeds. But, it hasn't been proven yet if the new chemically treated seed is safe for animals like bees that regularly visit your tomato farm. Also, if you buy the seeds once, the farmer has to sign a contract saying he won't save the tomato seeds to use the next year and will buy more seeds every year.
6. The government starts lowering farmers' taxes if they grow a lot of corn.
7. Oil prices go up in the United States which means that it becomes more expensive to ship fruits and vegetables grown far away to Chicago.
8. A new soul food restaurant opens up that is affordable and cooks vegetables only from local farms.

9. The city sets up a composting program so that compost is collected just like trash around the city and brought to farms that can use it to grow more food.

Debrief

To close out, ask the teens if they have any questions about the food system and if they know about any other shifts in their local food system. Maybe changes in their school lunch or the opening of a new grocery store or closing of a smaller grocery store. Why do these shifts happen? What do they mean for our food production chain?

The following are some facilitator background documents on shifts in food systems if needed for reference:

- “Food Issues,” Sustainable Table, Grace Communications Foundation, <http://www.sustainabletable.org/940/food-issues>.
- “Food Deserts,” Food Empowerment Project, <http://www.foodispower.org/food-deserts/>.
- Sheila Golden, *Urban Agriculture Impacts: Social, Health, and Economics: A Literature Review* (Berkeley: University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources, 2013), <http://asi.ucdavis.edu/programs/sarep/publications/food-and-society/ualitreview-2013.pdf>.
- “Food Access Research Atlas,” US Department of Agriculture, <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas.aspx>

ACTIVITY TWO: FOOD CHOICE (35 MINUTES)

So far, we’ve talked a lot about different characteristics of our communities and our food systems that can lead to food insecurity and food deserts or create equality.

Ask the participants whether they think there are any individual characteristics of ourselves or our families that impact how they eat. If people know how to eat healthy, then why do people sometimes choose apple pie over an apple? (Emphasize that this choice is okay some of the time.) Explain that we don’t make our decisions only based on health and ask them what other factors play into food choice.

Suggested Phrasing: “Food choice is actually a two-stage process. First, there is the food that’s available to you, within your budget that you can reasonably get to. We’re going to call that your choice set. (Show an image of a big grocery store, a bodega, and a farmers’ market.) Most times, what is in your choice set is decided at the national, regional, or sometimes community level. For example, by the regional transit authority choosing to open or shut down a bus line that leads to a grocery store. Then, there’s the food that you choose to eat within the options available to you. For example, when you are standing in the grocery store and you have \$2, do you choose to buy pasta or bread? We’re going to call that your daily choices (show an image of a fridge or vending machine). We make these daily choices at an individual or family level. It’s important when looking at food insecurity to create solutions that will work at both stages.”

Engage the students in a discussion on food choice.

- Possible Prompts: What are reasons you see your friends choose certain foods? How about your family? Why do you choose certain foods? Who else is involved in your decision? Are there any other reasons you see people in your community choose certain foods?

Write the students’ responses on the board. Try to put similar answers near each other. Fill in some gaps if needed. At a minimum, the following categories should develop:

- taste
- health
- convenience
- price
- availability
- social and cultural traditions
- advertising and marketing

Explain that part of this group is to create a solution to teen food insecurity in our community. When looking for solutions, it is important to take into account how we can change the food system.

Suggested Phrasing: “So, for example, if you had a program that taught teens how to make yummy, healthy meals, that wouldn’t do any good if teens couldn’t readily buy the ingredients needed to cook those meals in their communities and within their budget. Here you have a program targeting daily choices, without the choice set to support those decisions.

On the flip side, if you started a healthy corner store that sold zucchini from local farms, at an affordable price, it's possible that everyone would keep buying potato chips instead because they didn't know how to cook zucchini, weren't sure what it was, or didn't know how it would taste. Here you have an intervention that's expanding choice set, without working to change daily choice habits."

Successful programs work to expand choice sets AND expand daily choices.

Ask the youth:

- Which of the categories brainstormed above do you think has the greatest influence on our daily food choices? Remind them that these are the choices we make based on the options available.
 - If you wanted to change people's daily food choices, what would be some good interventions? Give the example: if you think the best intervention would be making food cheaper, stand by the price sign.
-

ACTIVITY THREE: VIDEO CLIPS AND TEENS IN OTHER COMMUNITIES (35 MINUTES)

Suggested Phrasing: *"We've already talked today about things that can shift our food system to be more or less equal and ways that we decide as individuals what food to choose. Now, we're going to watch some videos to identify more problems that can make our food system unequal, and more solutions that we can work on together to make our food system more equal."*

Safe Space Warning: Some of the following clips may include sensitive issues for some students, feel free to only show the videos you feel will speak to your students or choose other videos or forms of artistic expression focused on food production chains.

These are only suggestions. We recommend choosing three or four clips or forms of expression.

Video clips explaining food systems

- **Food Inc. trailer:** https://youtu.be/eHJiNC_7wuw
 - » How is food grown?
- **The Meatrix:** <http://www.themeatrix.com/>
 - » How is meat produced?

- **How Does It Grow?:** <http://www.pbs.org/food/how-does-it-grow/apples/> (You could also watch videos for other vegetables, fruits and fungi.)
 - » How do apples grow?
- **Food Chains trailer:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bn0zC4szVs>
 - » Who grows our food?
- **What's wrong with our food system TEDx Talk:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F7ld9caYw-Y>
 - » What is the slow food movement?
- **Teens for Food Justice:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6J4SsOpqcuE>
 - » What are some teens in New York City learning about how they purchase food and what are the consequences?

After showing each video, as a group answer the following questions:

- What was the problem the video talked about? Do you think this problem exists in Altgeld?
- Where does this problem fit in our food system? Distribution? Consumption? Etc.
- How does this problem impact our individual food choice?
- What solutions did the video show to help fix the problem?
- What was surprising about the clips?
- Are there important points of view to consider that aren't reflected in the video(s)? It is important to be critical consumers of information and think about other points of view. What is being included or excluded in the clips?
- What questions do you still have?

CLOSE OUT (5 MINUTES)

Review the Day

Identify who wants to take on the following roles next time (icebreaker, check-in, pluses and deltas, leading the solidarity clap).

Give **Action 4 Change (Homework)** to be completed for next session.

Pluses and Deltas

Solidarity Clap

Action for Change Worksheet

To prepare for next week please fill out the following sheet. Pick any day of the week and take this sheet with you. Fill out the blank spaces below. Write down where you're eating your meals or snacks, what you like about this location, what you don't like about this location, why you eat here, and how you think it fits into our overall food system. There are four spaces to account for the different meals and snacks you might have during the day. Try to be as descriptive as possible. If you feel uncomfortable writing about what you eat, feel free to write about what an imaginary teenager might eat on a regular day in Altgeld. The goal is to think about what are good places to get food and what are bad places to get food in Altgeld.

Meal / Snack 1

What time are you eating this meal / snack? And, where are you eating this meal / snack?

What are you eating? And, how much did it cost? If you don't know exactly, how much do you think it cost?

What do you like about where you are eating this meal?

What don't you like about where you are eating this meal?

What, if anything, would you change about this meal, where you're eating it, or anything else?

Where do you think this food came from or who do you think made it?

Meal / Snack 2

What time are you eating this meal / snack? And, where are you eating this meal / snack?

What are you eating? And, how much did it cost? If you don't know exactly, how much do you think it cost?

What do you like about where you are eating this meal?

What don't you like about where you are eating this meal?

What, if anything, would you change about this meal, where you're eating it, or anything else?

Where do you think this food came from or who do you think made it?

Meal / Snack 3

What time are you eating this meal / snack? And, where are you eating this meal / snack?

What are you eating? And, how much did it cost? If you don't know exactly, how much do you think it cost?

What do you like about where you are eating this meal?

What don't you like about where you are eating this meal?

What, if anything, would you change about this meal, where you're eating it, or anything else?

Where do you think this food came from or who do you think made it?

Meal / Snack 4

What time are you eating this meal / snack? And, where are you eating this meal / snack?

Session 8

What are you eating? And, how much did it cost? If you don't know exactly, how much do you think it cost?

What do you like about where you are eating this meal?

What don't you like about where you are eating this meal?

What, if anything, would you change about this meal, where you're eating it, or anything else?

Where do you think this food came from or who do you think made it?

REFLECTION

Do you have anything you'd like to share about your meals and snacks today? (Was this enough food? Did you skip any meals or snacks?)

Session 9

My Community, My Home

Objectives: During this session, teens will practice community asset mapping and delve deeper into the Teen Food Literacy Program's (TFLP's) purpose and goals. At the end of this session, the participants will be able to:

- display a greater understanding of TFLP and its purpose;
- analyze community resources;
- explore what makes a space teen-friendly;
- understand how those resources influence life styles and food choice; and
- learn how to write a formal letter to a business owner.

Materials: Poster board, markers, stoplight stickers (red, green, and yellow dot stickers), a large map of the community, markers, and stoplight dot stickers (red, yellow, and green).

WELCOME AND CHECK-IN (10 MINUTES)

Check-In Circle

Review Agenda

Icebreaker

ACTIVITY ONE: COMMUNITY ASSET MAPPING (65 MINUTES)

Ask all the teens to pull out their completed homework.

The highs and lows of food: Go around the room and have each teen respond to these questions.

- What was the best thing you ate this week? Where did you get it? What did you like about this meal? Was it wholesome, healthy, and affordable?
- What was the least favorite or unhealthiest food you ate this week? Where did you get it? Was it accessible or affordable?

Ask teens to sit in a circle facing the front of the room. Ask one teen to volunteer to write down responses in the right categories on a large sheet or on the board.

Categorizing

Ask the teens to share some places they visit on a regular day to eat or buy food. Use the homework as a guide. Provide the following categories: grocery stores, corner stores, school, after school

activities that provide snacks or meals, the homes of friends and family members, food pantries, and other meal programs. Feel free to add other categories that might be important in this community. For each category, have teens call out specific places in their community to record (e.g., the name of a grocery store). Teens should share these places but not spend too much time commenting on the quality of these locations as that will happen during discussion.

Record Keeping Note: Keep a separate page for each category. While the teens are sharing names and locations of places they visit for food resources, ask a teen volunteer to write the location on the correct piece of paper. Put circles or stars on the places that continue to come up or that multiple people agree they get food to show that they are important. If there are locations that don't fit nicely into a category, feel free to create an "other" list.

Coloring in the Categories

After recording all locations teens get food, review the locations on the pieces of paper around the room.

Invite teens to use their stoplight stickers to mark their impressions of the places they go to buy or eat food. Encourage teens to come to a consensus on the color of each location. After talking about it, it's ok to put two different colors if a consensus isn't reached. But, make sure the teens practice consensus building.

Teens have 5 to 7 minutes for this piece.

- Red stickers are negative ("stop"): The teens go to this place but do not like it at all or they can't get to it. The teens do not go here because of negative connotations.
- Yellow stickers are okay but not good ("slow down"): The teens go here but it's not the best place, maybe they go here because it's convenient, cheap, or accessible.
- Green stickers are good places ("go"): Teens go here often, like the location. Teens hear this is a great place for food.

Debrief

Invite the teens to discuss the locations they shared and the stickers they used to mark the map or categories. The teens should leave this conversation able to think critically about the resources that provide teen-accessible food in their community. They should have a better understanding of their community and what issues exist. Use the following questions to promote the discussion. Write key words from the discussion on the board.

- What color or colors appears most often? Why?
- Are there categories that have more green/yellow/red stickers? What makes that category a good/okay/bad place to get food?
- What makes a red sticker a bad place? Prompt for price? Attitude? What they sell?

- What would it take to make the red or yellow spots in the categories green ones?
- What is your ideal green sticker location? In other words, what is your ideal food-resource location? This can be imaginary and located in any food category.
 - » What type of food would be served or be available for purchase?
 - » When would it be open?
 - » What options would it support (e.g., affordable prices, freshness, organics, healthy)?
 - » How would it gear towards teens, if at all?
 - » Where would it be located?

***Suggested Phrasing:** “Ideally, we would have more green locations for teens in our community. Our work with TFLP will be to learn about food justice, develop leadership skills, and change our communities. Over this 16-week period, we will learn a lot of lessons from each other, and, at the end, we’ll come up with a project that will help the community. Toward the end of this curriculum, as a group you will work on a project that will in some way influence the community regarding food and food access. Start thinking now about what project you would like to take on to create more green dots.”*

ACTIVITY TWO: THANK YOU NOTES (40 MINUTES)

Invite teens to reflect on what they’ve learned in the past sessions regarding their community’s needs, their needs, and TFLP’s purpose. Have the teens pick a green-sticker location to which they would like to send a group thank you note for providing good food for teens.

Write down the following prompts on the board or on pieces of paper around the room.

- Introduce TFLP:
 - » What is TFLP?
 - » Who is a part of TFLP?
 - » What is TFLP’s goal/purpose/mission statement?
- Why is the green-sticker location teen friendly?
- How is the green-sticker location helping TFLP reach its goals?
- Additional thoughts and compliments.

Then ask the group to answer each prompt, writing them on the board or paper. After the collection of ideas is written on the board, help the teens put together a letter. Invite teens to share phrases to build the community letter. The facilitator should outline these phrases on the board so everyone can see.

Edit the letter with the teens so it is at a level the teens would be comfortable sharing with outside audiences. Have the facilitator mail the letter to the green dot location that was chosen.

Whenever an organization does something really helpful for TFLP, adjust the letter and send it to them as well. This is a great way to get partners on board and to start thinking about who can help with the community project. This is also a great way to show teens how to communicate with business owners and people in authority. When going on field trips, you can also bring a copy of the letter. Ask one teen to read it aloud to the person providing the field trip tour to practice public speaking.

CLOSE OUT (5 MINUTES)

Review the Day

Identify who wants to take on the following roles next time (icebreaker, check-in, pluses and deltas, leading the solidarity clap).

Pluses and Deltas

Solidarity Clap

Session 10

Identities and Food

Objectives: During this session, teens will learn to see through assumptions, break down stereotypes related to food, and realize how their own identities are related to food. At the end of this session, the participants will be able to:

- identify how their own identities shape the food they eat; and
- understand how to see through false assumptions often made by society based on food access or food choice.

Materials: characteristic card, index cards, pens, copies of the iceberg activity handout, and an internet-enabled computer and projector.

WELCOME AND CHECK-IN (10 MINUTES)

Check-In Circle

Review Agenda

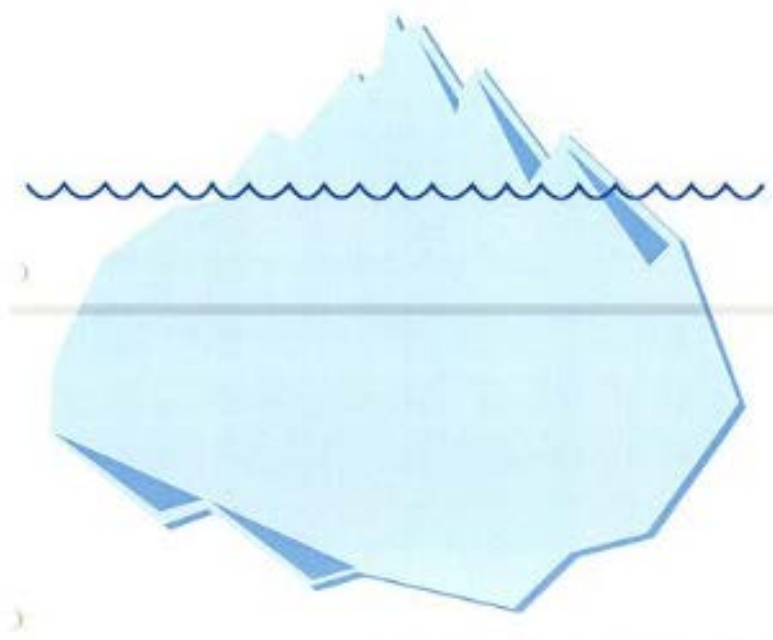
Icebreaker

ACTIVITY ONE: ICEBERG (20 MINUTES)

Prepped Material: Using a poster sheet, draw the outline of an iceberg, and the water line. Just the tip of the iceberg is visible above the water. The majority of the iceberg is underwater and thus not visible.

***Suggested Phrasing:** “In this way, an iceberg is a bit like a person. Other people can tell a few things about you from what they see, but the majority of what makes up who you are is below the surface. When people make assumptions, it’s usually about what they think they know or see from this top part sticking out above the surface.”*

Split teens into small groups. Ask a teen to hand out the Iceberg Activity Resource



[This is just a sheet with an iceberg, most of which is underwater] to the teens in each group. Tell them that they are each going to fill in their iceberg with:

- What's above the surface, the things you can tell about me from what you can see
- What's below the surface, the things you wouldn't know about me unless we were friends or family
- Here are some ideas on what to touch on when you share: Talents, likes, dislikes, siblings, education, favorite books and movies, race, religion, age, favorite sports, health, family dynamics, music tastes, where your family is from, things you've overcome, pets, allergies, hopes, fears, relationship status.

Give the group five minutes to reflect and fill out their iceberg.

- Facilitators share their icebergs first, setting a tone for the group. In addition to the above ideas you might want to touch on the following when you share: sexual orientation, gender identity, physical ability, mental ability, race, religion, age, ethnicity.
- Once the facilitator shares, ask the teen's if they'd like to write anything else on their iceberg (they may feel encouraged to share more after seeing your icebergs). Give them a minute to write down any additional thoughts.
- Teens can choose to disclose what they feel comfortable with. Be open to anything that they want to share whether it's something low risk or high risk. Encourage them to say what is important to them at the time of the activity.
- Teens go around the circle sharing their icebergs. While each teen is speaking, remind the rest of the circle to be quiet as a sign of respect. At the end of each sharer, the facilitators should thank each teen and clap for them.

- After every teen has had the opportunity to speak, ask the small group to reflect on the activity together, facilitators should ask:
 - » What are one to two words that describe what it was like to put things about yourself on the iceberg?
 - » How did you feel when you said your statement?
 - » How did you decide what to share about yourself?
 - » Did any of your peers' responses surprise you? Why?

Debrief

Large group debrief to discuss the following questions:

- How does this activity relate to assumptions people have about each other?
- How does it relate to assumptions you had about each other?
- Do you think it will change the way you look at other people?

ACTIVITY TWO: IDENTIFIERS AND FOOD (45 MINUTES)

Suggested Phrasing: "Each of our unique identities and lived experiences inform how we see the world, how we value food, and what is most important for our food choices."

Have each teen quietly reflect for a few minutes. Instruct each teen to think about different values and identifiers that define who they are. After a few minutes, give each participant a number of index cards. For however many students there are in the classroom, divide by two and add one and that is how many cards they should receive. So, if there are 12 kids, they should be given seven cards each.

On each card, they should write one value or identifier that best describes who you are and what you are about. Examples of things to write include characteristics, values, race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, hobbies, or gender identity. Teens may write identifiers that have no apparent relation to food choice; such choices present a challenging opportunity for the teen try to connect how that piece of their identity does or does not impact their food choices. This is okay.

Have participants order their notecards in a stack with the values/identifiers ranked in order of how they influence food choices, with the most important on the bottom of the pile. For example, being an athlete might be really important for food choice because you have to eat more calories. Then, set up the room like speed dating, with two rows of chairs facing each other.

For the next 20 minutes, rotating partners every 3 minutes, have pairs share the card on top of their stack and explain why that card is important to their identity. Then have each teen rip up the card on the top of their stack. Partners should then discuss how losing that part of their identity would change/influence/impact their food choices. Each time they switch partners, teens should rip up another index card and continue the discussion.

By the end of the activity, they should be left with one card that has not been ripped up. This is the value/identifier they wrote as having the most influence on their food choices. The 3 minutes will seem like a long time for the teens to be paired to discuss their identifier, and it will cause uncomfortable silence. This is meant to force the teens to dig deeper and get to know one another.

Debrief

In large group discussion, reflect on the activity.

- Which identity markers did they rip up first, representing the least amount of influence on their food choices? Why were they considered least influential?
- Which identity marker was each teen left with at the end representing the largest impact on their food choices? Why was this the most influential?
- Would you have written down the same words on your index cards if you knew the event was about food choice? What would you have done the same? Differently?
- Were there any similarities between what members of the group wrote down? What were the differences?

ACTIVITY THREE: FOOD SCENARIOS—PEOPLE'S ASSUMPTIONS (40 MINUTES)

In this activity, participants will explore different social and economic elements of their identities. Through this, participants will become more conscious of their own layers of self and those of their fellow participants. The following exercise will allow us to see how we associate different types of identity characteristics with different types of food choices.

Safe Space Reminder: Please allow people to have a comfort check system but also emphasize the need for challenge in a safe space and how to do that productively in the group. This process could include revisiting the group guidelines. One question to ask the group is how members like to be supported in times of stress, distress, and discomfort. A safe space does not mean that all difficult issues are avoided, it means that there are avenues to ensure that everyone has the tools and support they need to deal with difficult situations.

Play the following clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zNbF006Y5x4&feature=youtu.be>

Ask the students the following questions:

- Did you assume that both cups were the same size?

- Did you assume that the man would be able to sit in the chair?
- Did you assume that the room was smaller than it really was?
- Did you assume that the picture on the wall was larger than a Post-it Note?

***Suggested Phrasing:** “The brain is trying to process a lot of information at once, so it likes to create shortcuts, especially when there’s a lot going on. Scientists have shown that the human brain receives 11 million bits of information every moment, but we can only consciously process 40 bits. One of the ways the brain creates shortcuts all the time is when we meet new people we tend to make assumptions about them—just based on what they look like.”*

Ask the group if anyone can provide you a definition for an assumption. Then ask the teens to come up and write their definition on the flip chart. Finish this discussion by talking about assumptions.

***Suggested Phrasing:** “When we make a statement or reach a conclusion without proof or demonstration of proof, we are making an assumption. The assumptions we make are based in our experiences, what we have been taught, our values and the emotions we feel. Sometimes assumptions are based on stereotypes. Stereotypes are when people have an oversimplified image or idea of another person like ‘People from Jersey are jerks’ or ‘Women are bad drivers.’”*

Discussion

Facilitators should lead with examples for the following questions:

- Are the assumptions we make about a person generally positive or negative?
 - » Why do you think that is?
- What happens if we make an assumption that turns out to be wrong?
- What are some assumptions that have been made about you?
- Have any of these assumptions been based on the food you eat?
- How did it feel to have them make that assumption?
- What are some other common assumptions that you know not to be true?

Set Up

Divide participants into groups of 3 or 4 people (minimum of 4 groups). Assign each group one of the following food scenarios. Choose from the following scenarios:

- shopping weekly at a farmers' market
- receiving food stamps (SNAP)
- making a conscious effort to eat only locally-sourced organic food
- regularly visiting food banks or soup kitchens
- receiving free or reduced-price school lunch
- home cooking most meals with fresh ingredients
- reading the ingredient label and nutrition facts before purchasing
- shopping at Walmart (or other large chain known for lower prices)
- eating fast food numerous times a week
- shopping in a supermarket like Jewel or Whole Foods
- only eating takeout from good restaurants

Have each group spend 5 to 10 minutes brainstorming assumptions society makes about a person in their scenario to share with the group.

After each group shares, prompt the whole room to think about the following:

- Are these assumptions true?
- Would these assumptions change if the person were a different race, gender, age, weight?
- What is the food like in that scenario?
- What does society think of the food in that scenario?

The goal of this activity is to get participants thinking about how people associate identities with certain food scenarios. This exercise will demonstrate the relationship of identity and food.

Debrief

Ask participants how they felt about the activity. Address any questions they may have in relation to content or process. Ask how the above activity demonstrated different aspects of individual identity and values and societal values. Use the following prompts to encourage discussion:

- Do certain food scenarios create bad stereotypes?
 - » Do certain food scenarios create praise?
 - » Are certain food scenarios more accepted by society? Why?
- How does society value certain feeding scenarios over others?
- Do different food scenarios create inequality? Why? In a political way? Social way? Economic way?
- Ask participants to revisit their most important identity characteristic they associated with their food choice. See how it is relevant to the question of stigma, inequality.

CLOSE OUT (5 MINUTES)

Review the Day

Ask who wants to take on the following roles next time (icebreaker, check-in, pluses and deltas, leading the solidarity clap)?

Pluses and Deltas

Solidarity Clap

Session 11

Our Food Justice

Objectives: During this session, teens will further develop their knowledge base around social, economic, and political forces that can create unequal food environments within community. At the end of this session, the participants will be able to:

- understand how power relationships in our country contribute to a food system that doesn't serve everyone equally;
- identify social, economic, and political factors linking hunger to families living in low-income and underserved communities; and
- begin to think about what we could change about the food environment that could improve access to quality food for everyone, especially those who face unequal access today.

Materials: Photos from magazines or the Internet depicting people of different ages, genders, and racial identities, poster board, markers, and a picture for social, institutional, and individual levels.

WELCOME AND CHECK-IN: (10 MINUTES)

Check-In Circle

Review Agenda

Icebreaker

ACTIVITY ONE: STEREOTYPING EXERCISE (25 MINUTES)

Prepped Material Reminder: The photos you choose for this activity should not have context that speaks to the subject's wealth or profession (no clothes that label a profession, no indicators of where the person might live or how much money they might make).

Break the participants into groups of at least four. Give each group one of the photos on a large piece of paper. Ask each group to use stereotypes to draw out that person's identity and the food they think that person might eat. Then ask each group to share with the room.

Discussion

- How did you feel during this activity?
- What did you learn?
- Did anything make you feel uncomfortable?
- What about each picture led you to make assumptions about that person's food choice?

- » Were these assumptions based on barriers, oppression, or inequality created by society?

Suggested Phrasing: “In American culture, there is a big emphasis on individual responsibility and achievement. But this overlooks the many ways in which society’s norms and the ways the world is organized create inequalities. The organizations and systems we live in every day-- schools, the economy, religious faiths, the way our physical space has been created-- all shape the choices and chances that people have. Some people face barriers to fully participating in their food environment because of inequality, discrimination, or a lack of power. As we move forward, let’s make sure that we are aware of different types of inequalities that influence the food environment. Let’s agree that in our project campaign at the end of this curriculum we are working to reduce the inequality of the food environment.”

ACTIVITY TWO: PATHS THAT SHAPE INEQUALITY AND LIMIT PEOPLE POWER (45 MINUTES)

Set Up

Prepped Material: On a whiteboard or flip chart, draw a big triangle. Each corner of the triangle should be labeled with one of the following: social, institutional or political, and individual.

Split the room into small groups. Have each group copy the triangle on a piece of paper. As a group, write an example for each corner, and put a picture in each corner of the triangle on the board. Then, have each group fill out their own triangle. Finally, have each group share back with the room and fill out the big triangle with the pictures together.

Social

- Think about what we learned about how our society thinks about hunger and income. What do we assume are characteristics of people who are hungry?
- Tape an image of a lot of people talking under this corner.

Institutional or Political

- Think about the way in which institutions (e.g., government, legislators, schools, policies) create policies or programs, or fail to act in ways that keep people in a cycle of hunger. Write these ideas down under the “institutional or political” heading on the triangle. For example, what are ways in which our society is set up (structures) that disadvantage people (e.g., inadequate schools, poorly paid jobs, criminal justice policies and practices, SNAP limits)?
- Tape a representative image of law or government under this corner.

Individuals

- Think about how your own place in the world and your own barriers and privileges can contribute to society's ideas about hunger. For example, is it harder to interact with the food system because of an identity you have, such as being a teenager?
- Tape an image of a solidarity fist or an individual or a mirror under this corner.

Break (10 minutes)

ACTIVITY THREE: FINDING OUR ROLE IN LOCAL FOOD JUSTICE (35 MINUTES)

With the previous activity in hand, divide the students into small groups.

Suggested Phrasing: "We just spent time thinking about how social assumptions, institutional constraints, and our own identities impact the way we interact with food. These can be barriers to accessing quality, affordable, and appropriate food. However, we have also learned about ways that people all over the world are addressing issues related to food justice in their communities. Think back to the videos of other teens doing work around food justice in their communities. Think about the work and allies in this community who are already involved in food issues. At the beginning of this course we learned about the food system and how food impacts our body. The past few weeks we learned about the social injustices of food, how food impacts people differently based on their social, institutional, and individual identities. Now, we are going to use that knowledge to think of ways we have power to act within our food system to improve our community.

This program is about rising above stereotypes and statistics that limit teens' ability to be powerful. It's designed to empower teens like you to be critical thinkers so you can make the best decisions for yourself when it comes to your body, how you express yourself and how you choose to develop healthy habits in relationships. So far, we have been building our power as teens to change our food system."

Remind the group of the following:

- **Knowledge is power.** In this group, you will learn how food affects your body and how to make the best food choices to keep our body running how you want it to.
- **Exercising choice is power.** This group is a safe space where teens learn that they have the right to be healthy and choose their food on their own terms.

- **Being assertive is power.** You will learn how to communicate assertively with leaders and representatives in your community. Asserting your goals for your communities' food.
- **Owning your individuality is power.** This program is about encouraging teens to see and value their unique gifts, talents and creativity. This group is dedicated to teens defining themselves for themselves. This is why we have you all set your own community goal.
- **Community support is power.** This is a space where the group can rise above negativity so they can support and encourage each other.

Suggested Phrasing: "Let's spend some time thinking about the barriers written within our triangles. This is the way that the system is currently set up. We are going to try to change it using our power."

In a large group discussion, ask the teens if they had all of the money and all of the power in the world, what would they do to reduce social, institutional, and individual barriers to food security in their community. Write the answers down on the large triangle on the board. For example, for the individual barrier of accessing food as a teenager, a solution might be to lower the age limit at food pantries so teenagers could access emergency food resources. Let the teens know that you will save these ideas and that next time, the teens will use these ideas as a starting point to brainstorm which campaign they'd like to work on.

CLOSE OUT (5 MINUTES)

Review the Day

Identify who wants to take on the following roles next time (icebreaker, check-in, pluses and deltas, leading the solidarity clap).

Pluses and Deltas

Solidarity Clap

Session 12

Tying It All Together

Objectives: Teens will reflect on what they've learned so far and draw connections between all of the topics covered. At the end of this session, the participants will be able to:

- develop a sense of pride at how much has been accomplished in just 11 weeks; and
- understand that all of the topics covered are connected and that we can't talk about hunger without talking about justice.

Materials: A ball of string or twine, an object (e.g., ball, apple), food production chain poster or projection, poster board, markers, stop light stickers (red, yellow, and green dots), and food for the potluck whether it be pre-prepared or ingredients and materials to prepare together.

WELCOME AND CHECK-IN: (10 MINUTES)

Check-In Circle

Review Agenda

Icebreaker

Suggested Phrasing: "Everyone has put in a lot of hard work over the past eleven weeks. It's important to take the time to celebrate what we've accomplished and acknowledge how far we've come. It's easy to get burned out and tired when you're involved in this kind of work every day. After a while, it can feel like trying to create change is draining the energy out of our group while problems continue to build up around us. Though it's important to acknowledge that feeling, it's really important to remember that the work we are doing is significant. Taking opportunities for celebration, self-care, and reflection are crucial to staying motivated, engaged, and empowered. Today is about celebrating how far we've come."

ACTIVITY ONE: WE'RE ALL CONNECTED STRING EXERCISE (10 MINUTES)

Have participants stand in a circle. Hand one volunteer the ball of string. Ask her/him to name one thing they are proud of accomplishing over the past nine weeks. Then instruct her/him to tie one end of the string to her/his finger and toss the ball to another participant. That participant should

then answer the same question, loop the string around her/his finger and then toss the string to another member. They should try to toss the string to members across the circle, not on either side of them. Continue this until everybody has had a chance to speak and there is an intricate web of string uniting the circle. You can ask one question or multiple questions. Acknowledge everything that has been accomplished collectively. (**Note:** Keep a ball or apple or small object on hand and see if the string can support the weight of the object.)

If everyone answered, and the web is still not tight enough, feel free to go around several times asking any of the following reflection questions:

- What's something you've learned over the past nine weeks about food justice?
- What's something you've learned over the past nine weeks from one of your fellow teens?
- How did you grow/change over the past nine weeks?
- What is one way someone else in this room has grown or improved over the past nine weeks?

Suggested Phrasing: "There's a lot of power in this web and a lot to be proud of. We've come a long way."

ACTIVITY TWO: PROBLEMS WITH OUR FOOD SYSTEM (35 MINUTES)

Split the room into six groups. Have each group brainstorm problems that could occur at their assigned stage of the food system; write the answers on a large piece of paper at the front of the room. Use the following as example problems if needed:

Farming

- Our farmers don't make enough money to buy the food that they grow.
- Our land has chemicals from factories and isn't safe to grow food.
- Climate change makes it hard to grow food.

Processing

- Sometimes the chemicals used to process foods aren't healthy for our bodies.
- According to author Martin Lindstrom, the average apple on a supermarket shelf in the United States is 14 months old and has lost most of its antioxidants. Food loses nutrients the longer it is out of the ground.

Distribution

- Sometimes our food comes from far away. It can be expensive to transport food from the other side of the country or the world. On the way, food can lose nutrients and flavor.

Grocery

- We don't always live near grocery stores with healthy produce.
- Quality food is often too expensive to be accessible to everyone.

Table

- Cooking healthy food takes a long time. We have to go to school or work.
- Sometimes we don't know how to cook healthy food.
- Sometimes we don't like healthy food.

Trash

- There is a lot of food waste.

Now, hand out red stickers to each youth. Ask them to silently go around the room, read all of the problems, and put a sticker next to any problem that worries them. Let youth add new problems if they think of something that isn't on the board.

Debrief

- Which problems have a lot of red stickers? Why?
- Do you think this is a problem in our community?
- What are the two biggest problems in our community (add more problems if necessary)?
- What are the biggest barriers to food security (add more problems if necessary)?

ACTIVITY THREE: SOLUTIONS WITHIN OUR FOOD SYSTEM (35 MINUTES)

Suggested Phrasing: "Though there are many challenges, there are also many amazing and dedicated groups and individuals that have fought to change our food system for the better, and they have made some major progress. As we move toward our own project campaign, this activity will allow the teens to learn about some of these solutions. Here are some solutions for inspiration."

There are also solutions earlier in the curriculum you should feel free to add. There also may be solutions from your community you'd like to add as well.

Farming

- Cultivate community gardens.

Processing

- Teach classes on how to make food from scratch.

Distribution

- Learn who your local farmers are and try to buy food from them.

Grocery

- Create mobile markets or make farmers markets more affordable with double-up food bucks.

Table

- Teach classes on nutrition and healthy food.

Trash

- Recycle and compost.

Ask teens to brainstorm new solutions or ways to change solutions already in place so that they work better in their community. After a number of solutions are brainstormed, ask teens to go around and put green stickers on solutions they think are good ideas.

Debrief

- Which solutions got a lot of green stickers?
- Who are people in our community we need as allies to carry out this solution?
- Who benefits from this solution?
- Does this solution work to change the food system at a local or regional level, a national level, or an international level?
- Do you think this solution could work in our community? Why? Why not?
- Will this solution fix the social, institutional, and or individual barriers that created the problem?

Now, explain to the youth that this group is about building teen power and learning about food, but it's also about action. After spending a few months together, now it is time to get started on the action part.

Ask the teens if they would like to work together to make one solution a reality.

Explain that they will spend the rest of their time together working on a solution to make the food system better for teens in Altgeld. Give each student two star stickers. Have them put the stickers on the solutions they'd like to work on as part of their campaign. Choose the three campaigns with the most star stickers. If there is a tie, discuss it to reach consensus and adjust the ideas if needed.

ACTIVITY FOUR: POTLUCK (25 MINUTES)

Options for the potluck are as follows:

- Participants could bring in a snack to share.
- A meal could be purchased with organization funds.
- The teens could cook a meal together using food from a food delivery, food pantry, or a donation box.

Prepped Materials: Make the space for the potluck as festive as possible by playing music, decorating, etc. Go around before eating and ask the teens to share one reason they are proud of themselves and one reason they are proud of the group.

CLOSE OUT (5 MINUTES)

Review the Day

Identify who wants to take on the following roles next time (icebreaker, check-in, pluses and deltas, leading the solidarity clap).

Pluses and Deltas

Solidarity Clap

Session 13

Action Campaign Goals

Objectives: During this session, the teens will begin strategically planning their action campaign project, creating a vision of teen food security for their community. At the end of this session, the participants will be able to:

- develop a SMART goal;
- identify allies to help and challenges to overcome; and
- practice consensus building.

Materials: Poster board, and markers.

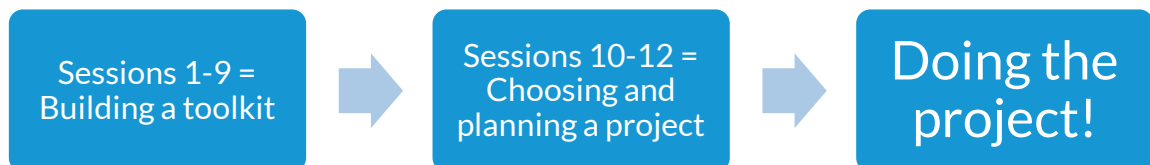
Note: This session is much less structured than previous sessions. As the group transitions to its action campaign, it is important to give it more power in decision making and leadership processes.

WELCOME AND CHECK-IN (10 MINUTES)

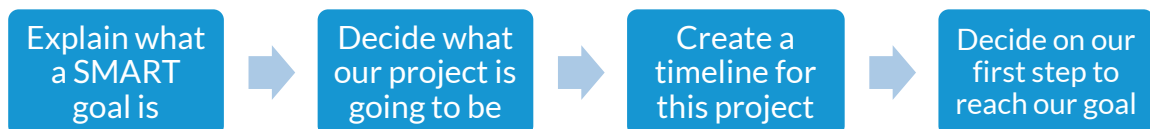
Check-In Circle

Review Agenda

Explain the project timeline:



Explain this session's timeline:



Icebreaker

ACTIVITY ONE: GOAL AND OBJECTIVE SETTING (60 MINUTES)

Go over each part of the SMART (Scheduled, Measureable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely) framework with the teens. Post the bulleted list of questions below at the front of the room to develop the

discussion of SMART goals. Present a quick example of a good (SMART) goal and a bad (undefined, unrealistic) goal. Talk the examples through until the teens understand the differences.

Suggested bad example: Ending hunger.

Ask the youth why this is a problematic example. Acknowledge that this represents an aspiration but that it is not specific enough to be actionable for local-level problem solving.

Suggested SMART example: We're going to work with local community organizations and farms to collect 200 additional pounds of food next month. The food will be donated to a local food distribution center that serves 50 community members.

Ask the participants why this is an example of a SMART goal.

Split the teens into three groups. Brainstorm a way to frame the campaign using SMART goals. Use the SMART questions to help test the goals. Split the room into three groups. Re-post the top three solutions brainstormed last week. Have each group use their solution as a starting point to brainstorm a SMART goal related to food work that could become the action campaign.

SMART Questions:

- What do you want to accomplish? (Specific)
- How are you going to measure your accomplishment? (Measurable)
- Do you have the power and skills, or can you build the power and skills to reach your goal? (Attainable)
- Are you willing to work toward the goal, and do you have the necessary time to do so? (Realistic)
- When do you want to accomplish your goal? (Timely)

Then, have each group report its SMART goal, answering the questions above. As a group, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each goal. Then decide, by the decision-making method agreed on by the group (voting or consensus), which goal or combination of goals the group will move forward with. Ask if anyone has concerns with the goal and make adjustments until everyone is motivated and on board. It is important that every teen feels their voice matters in the goal setting process. Write the goal on the board at the front of the room, leaving it up for the rest of the session with the option to put it back up at every new session.

ACTIVITY TWO: WHO IS IN OUR CORNER? (45 MINUTES)

On one color of notecard, have each teen write down who their allies are in the community. Put each ally on a separate card.

Allies include the following:

- support systems
- anyone working on a similar goal
- any possible partner organizations
- anyone who will be engaged in working towards the SMART goal

Suggested Phrasing: *“Remember to think of allies you know personally, like your friends and family; allies who are part of your community, like the principal; and allies who are part of institutions, like the director of the food bank or the senator of Illinois.”*

On another color notecard, have each teen write down any barriers that might stand in the way of the SMART goal. Put each barrier on a separate card. Remember to think about all three types of barriers: social, institutional and personal barriers.

Barriers include the following:

- anyone working against the goal
- anyone working on an opposing goal
- anyone who will not work with teenagers

Prepped Material: At one end of the wall, post a sign saying, “strong support”, and at the other end of the wall, post a sign reading, “strong challenge” with “weak support”, “neutral”, and “weak challenge” in between.

Have the youth place their allies and challenges on the spectrum. For example, the Greater Chicago Food Depository could be a “strong support” since they are willing to help out with staff time, resources, and donating food. In comparison, the school principal might be closer to the “weak support” a little further along the line if she might make a statement of support but probably won’t do that much. Then, the president of a major grocery store chain could be a “strong challenge” because their priority is to make profit and we may be recommending something that would mean less money.

It’s important to stress that even though creating a big goal can be overwhelming, there are already so many people on the support side of the room. We are not alone. Our community will support us.

Take a break here for the teens to stretch. Maybe even play the Appetite for Change video again in the background to get them pumped up.

CLOSE OUT (5 MINUTES)

Review the Day

- Was it difficult to make these decisions today?
- How did you work together as a group?
- Are there any strategies that would help us work better together as a group next time?
- What is one thing you appreciate about someone in this room even if you disagree with them?

Identify who wants to take on the following roles next time (icebreaker, check-in, pluses and deltas, leading the solidarity clap).

Pluses and Deltas

Solidarity Clap

Session 14

Action Campaign Timeline

Objectives: During this session, the teens will continue strategically planning their action campaign project, by developing an action timeline and choosing their first direct action. At the end of this session, the participants will be able to:

- recognize other teen leaders working toward community change;
- map an action timeline; and
- and break each direct action event down into action steps.

Materials: Poster board, markers, and an internet-enabled computer and projector.

WELCOME AND CHECK-IN (15 MINUTES)

Check-In Circle

Review Agenda

Icebreaker

ACTIVITY ONE: TEEN LEADERS (30 MINUTES)

Have the teens congratulate each other for developing a goal! And for knowing who to turn to for help. Now it's time to discuss what we need to reach our goal. Explain that there is a rich and full history of teens organizing to create better communities. Ask if the students can you name a teen leader in the world.

Here are some examples for you to share with the teens. Choose the ones you feel will resonate the most.

- <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2018/03/youth-activism-young-protesters-historic-movements/>
- <https://www.fastcompany.com/40535359/here-are-six-times-before-parkland-when-kids-led-social-change>
- <https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/08/these-7-young-female-leaders-are-changing-the-world.html>. <https://www.complex.com/life/young-activists-who-are-changing-the-world/>

After watching the video, ask the teens what are some actions these teens took and what are other actions that leaders in other social change movements have taken.

Answers may include:

- sit-ins
- speeches
- marches
- boycotts
- music videos
- asking to meet with people in power
- spreading the word on social media
- taking legal action

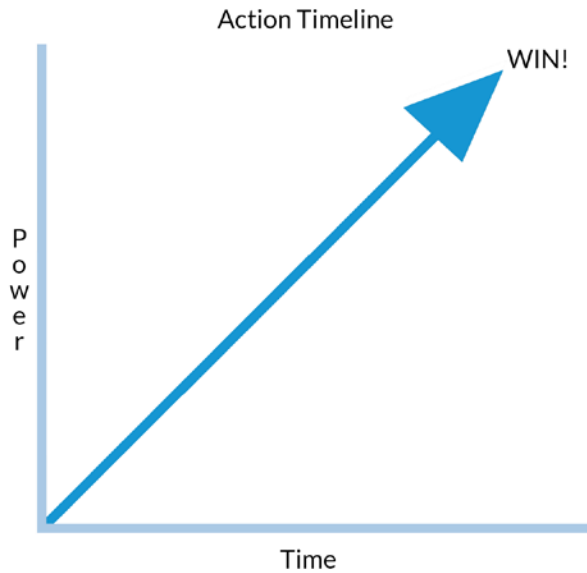
Suggested Phrasing: “Now we are going to learn from the strategies of these great teen leaders and create our own path to changing our food system.”

ACTIVITY TWO: TIMELINE CREATION (30 MINUTES)

Discussion

Prepped Material: Print out or draw the action timeline below on the board or a large piece of paper at the front of the room. Write the SMART goal in the top right corner.

Ask the students this question: “What is the timeline we want to set to accomplish our goal?” Put this date by the win side of the action timeline. Then put today’s date by the starting side of the action timeline.



Suggested Phrasing: “We are going to power map how to reach our goal. As time moves along, our power has to increase. We have a big goal to reach. It isn’t going to happen overnight. Successful projects are ones that build up power as they go, growing into a movement that can’t be stopped. That’s what we’re aiming to do here.

So, for example, if we just handed out flyers every week without doing anything else, we would stay at the same level of power over the course of the entire project. Do you think this would be successful? [The answer should be no.] Why?

Now, if we handed out flyers that said to come to an orientation event, then we went out and signed a hundred petitions, then had an action day when 50 people walked to a government office and handed over the petitions, we would keep escalating our power over the course of the entire project. Do you think this would be more successful? Less successful? [The answer should be more successful.] Why?”

Give further examples. Ask why it isn’t a good idea to start with a rally. Synthesize responses, and encourage the teens to discuss the drawbacks of starting with a confrontational direct action; for example, it could alienate potential supporters. Your key players might have agreed with you on some things, but now you’ve pushed them away. Ask the students why it is a good idea to build power over time.

Suggested Phrasing: “We’ll have a chance to educate the community about this movement slowly over time getting the largest number of people on board, so by the end, when we are escalating our power and need it most, for a march for example, we will have the maximum number of people on board.”

ACTIVITY THREE: MAPPING THE ACTION TIMELINE (30 MINUTES)

It’s important to explain the following to the teens:

Suggested Phrasing: “Now we’re going to map out our timeline for building up our direct-action events. Every direct-action event is intended to move as many challenges as possible over to the support side of the spectrum. When thinking about potential action events, it’s a good idea to follow the following steps: What is your smart goal? What is the biggest challenge to reaching your smart goal? Who is in your way? What is important to this person? How can you assert your power to make your smart goal important to this person?”

So, for example, if your smart goal is to get the school board to switch to a new school lunch company that is chosen by the students in six months, the biggest challenge might be getting the school board to decide. In this scenario, the principal and the school board members are the people you have to influence. If your community has an elected school board, political power among voters is important to the school board. As students, you could assert your power by creating a music video PSA and promoting it over social media to everyone over 18 who can vote, explaining the problems with school lunch and demanding that the school board change the school lunch company or they will be voted out of power at the next election.

Another strategy is to find out who else may be interested in seeing a change in school food and building relationships with those individuals and groups to amplify your influence. For example, the city of Chicago recently adopted a Good Food Purchasing Policy to drive change in the way schools and other government agencies work with the food system.⁷ Reach out to the people who have been pushing for change and find out how you can be part of the work to turn the policy into reality in your school.”

⁷ <https://www.chicagofoodpolicy.com/blog/2018/10/19/good-food-purchasing-program>

Go through these steps for our SMART goal. (Feel free to go through this exercise a few times with different actors.)

- What is your SMART goal?
- What is the biggest challenge to reaching your SMART goal?
- Who is in your way?
- What is important to this person?

Ask the participants how can they assert their power to make their SMART goal important to this person using beginning actions? Remember, we have to start off small and grow our power.

- Some examples include handing out informational flyers to raise awareness and make more allies, and scheduling a start-up meeting with your key players like the Greater Chicago Food Depository to discuss the facts. Write these options at the beginning of the timeline.

Ask the youth how can they assert their power to make your SMART goal important to this person using mid-level actions?

- Some examples include raps or dances in public spaces and posts to social media. Write these options in the middle of the timeline.

Finally, ask the students how they can assert their power to make your SMART goal important to this person using really powerful end-game actions?

- Examples include a sit-in in the school cafeteria, standing up with a sign at a town hall meeting, and asking the local food bank to publish a piece about us in their newsletter. Write these options at the end of the timeline.

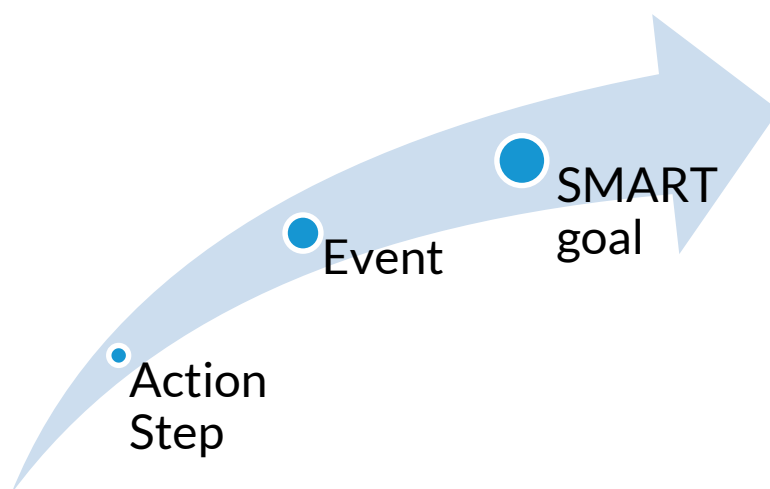
Next, ask if there are any more actions that the teens would like to add. Reiterate that this is a roadmap and a work in progress. Right now, we are just brainstorming. But, as our action timeline moves along, it's good to have some ideas saved up. Encourage the teens that when they have a new idea for an action, they put it on a sticky note and add it to the timeline. Then the group can talk it over at the next meeting.

ACTIVITY FOUR: NEXT STEPS (15 MINUTES)

***Suggested Phrasing:** “Now, we have a really exciting set of actions all planned out, and it’s looking pretty good. We have a clear end goal. Check in here with the group, as it can be pretty overwhelming to talk about the big picture.”*

Choose an event from the starter-direct action category to be the first event. Explain to the teens that now they are going to learn how to pull off this kind of event by breaking the event into manageable action steps. Events can be overwhelming to plan so it’s always good to break it down into manageable pieces.

- Decide on a date for the first event.
- If the action is to hand out flyers, some action steps will be to design a flyer, print the flyer, and decide where to post flyers or hand them out. Action steps are the verbs that are going to help us meet our mini-goal. Action steps can be things, like send out a reminder text, design a flyer, set up an Instagram.
- Brainstorm the action steps needed for our first event.
- Do we need any help with these action steps? Do we have a computer, a printer, tape, paper?
- Who wants to be in charge of each action step?

**CLOSE OUT (5 MINUTES)****Review the Day**

- Was it difficult to make these decisions today?

- How did you work together as a group?
- Are there any strategies that would help us work better together as a group next time?
- What is one thing you appreciate about someone in this room even if you disagree with them?

Identify who wants to take on the following roles next time (icebreaker, check-in, pluses and deltas, leading the solidarity clap).

Pluses and Deltas

Solidarity Clap

Session 15

Organizing Our Action Campaign Project

Objectives: During this session, teens will practice working through the action steps for their first direct action, and figure out how to work together without heavy facilitator involvement. At the end of this session, the participants will be able to:

- develop their own working groups,
- work independently towards a common goal, and
- develop a work flow for future sessions.

Materials needed: Poster board, and markers.

Note: This session might be a messy one as the teens learn to self-manage. It is up to the facilitator to decide how much the teens should figure out on their own vs. how much is assigned. Who is in what working group? What are logical events and action steps?

WELCOME AND CHECK-IN (10 MINUTES)

Check-in Circle

Review Agenda

Icebreaker

ACTIVITY ONE: BREAKOUT SESSION PLANNING (30 MINUTES)

Check-in question: Go around the room and have each teen name two things that they're good at and one thing that they'd like to learn.

***Suggested Phrasing:** The last few weeks we talked about action timelines, the power in this room, and the resources and skills we already have. In this room, we already have artists, public speakers, organizers, logistical planners. It's going to be important for us to communicate, work together and coordinate, but there also needs to be space for us to get down and do some work. One way that some groups organize is by splitting up into working groups. A working group is a way to split up and have different groups work on tasks that fit their skill sets. This way more work can get done in less time. So, for example, an art working group might paint a logo for a flyer while an outreach working group might develop a script for talking to*

new people. Different working groups will take on different tasks. Working groups support one another and ask one another for help when needed."

Check in to make sure everyone understands what a working group is.

The following are some examples of working groups and tasks they complete:

- Art Power Squad
 - » Develop any group signs, banners, logos, flyer design, flyer design, and web design. Visual messaging is especially important when working in communities that speak, read, and write in different languages and at different levels of fluency.
- Social Media Gurus
 - » Manage Facebook, a phone tree, Twitter, Snapchat, e-mail, group text, or whatever is trendy. Use media to do things like sending meeting reminders, setting up events, sending press releases, and spreading the word about fun updates.
- Direct Action
 - » Brainstorming ways to use gatherings and creative events to get messaging across to a broad population through chants, songs, flash mobs, letter-deliveries, or other events.
- Logistics
 - » Take notes at meetings; keep an ongoing record for new people to learn from or to remind us of what we've done; plan for food, meeting space, any equipment necessary; coordinate set up and clean-up; and keep an updated list of all the people in the group and their contact information.
- Coalition Building
 - » Reach out to local nonprofits and other student organizations that are doing work that connects to your action plan. Keep in touch with leaders in these other groups, go to their meetings, support their movements, invite them to your meetings, and tell them how to support your movement.
- Outreach
 - » Write messages for flyers, call or text people the day before an action to remind them to show up, call or message people the day after an action to thank them and plug them into your next event, and have one-on-one conversations at actions to rope people into your movement.

Feel free to include more groups and have teens rename them to take ownership. If there are a lot of teens, have more groups. Each group should have at least three people and no more than five people. You can also combine groups if there aren't enough participants, such as social media +

logistics, or art power squad + direct action, or outreach + direct action. If you're going to combine, it's good to combine direct action since there aren't always direct actions to plan.

Now, as a group have the teens discuss which working groups they need to reach their smart goal. Then, have the youth divvy up into working groups. Explain that working groups can change over time and this is just a start. If conflicts arise or no one wants to be a part of the working group, this is a good time to step back as a facilitator and let the teens work through their decision-making process and use their leadership skills.

Refer back to the action steps created last week for the first event on the timeline. Together, brainstorm which working group should be in charge of each action step.

ACTIVITY TWO: INTERNAL CAPACITY (50 MINUTES)

Break out into your working groups. Ask each working group to discuss the following prompts and for a volunteer in each group to write down ideas.

- What is needed to accomplish each action task assigned to your working group (e.g., materials, technical support, allies, time, money)?
- What do you already have that can help accomplish each action task? These can be experiences such as giving a school assembly; skills such as being a good writer; resources such as internet access to get a Facebook page; connections such as already being part of a group that's interested in working with us; or materials, such as paper and markers.
- What do you need that the rest of the group, you as the facilitator, and our allies can help out with? For example, this could be art supplies for a poster, printer, a proofreader for a letter, a microphone for a speech, etc.
- When will your group complete each action step?
- Who will be in charge of making sure each action step gets done?

Report back to the group.

***Suggested Phrasing:** This part is really important. Working groups are great, we can work more efficiently, and make sure everyone has a task. However, the tradeoff to working groups is that we don't have as many voices and opinions to make sure we are staying true to our group values. After every break-out group meeting, let's make sure we check back in. This is a space for us to voice concerns across working groups. For example, if you are in the logistics group, but you feel that the language the outreach group developed for the flyers could make some folks feel uncomfortable or be misinterpreted, here is your space to say that.*

If you think that the coalition team is missing a huge segment of this community, say so. This movement is only as powerful as we are together. Check each other. Give each working group a few minutes to present.

Ask every group to come to the front of the room, explain what they discussed and write down who will do what action step by next meeting on the board. Use this board to hold each other accountable. One way to make sure everyone's voice is heard is to give feedback after each presentation. For example, after a working group presents, have everyone listening give a thumbs up if it all sounds great, a thumb in the middle if they have some not-so-big concerns, and a thumbs down if they have a big concern.

ACTIVITY THREE: BRINGING IT BACK IN (25 MINUTES)

Explain that last week the group started off by:

- creating a SMART goal;
- looking at our action plan and deciding the next strategic step—our first event; and
- breaking down our first action into smaller action steps.

Discuss how today, the group will keep going by:

- breaking into working groups;
- deciding which working group would carry out each action step;
- identifying what we already had that could help us reach our action step;
- deciding what was missing that we needed to reach our action step;
- starting work within our groups; and
- reporting back to the whole group.

Ask the teens what they think of that process.

Suggested Phrasing: *"Remind the group that we're all dedicated to this cause and in this for the long haul. We all have other commitments outside this room, such as school, work, and family. Make sure that you can do what you say you can do when you sign up for action steps. Don't overcommit, and stay true to your word."*

Stress that we have to carry out the action steps we volunteered for if this project is going to work. Talk about what should happen if you can't or don't complete your action step. Should it be like a job where you have to find a friend to fill in? What should happen? Talk about how important it

is to speak up if you are behind or feeling overwhelmed. Go back to the community guidelines if needed.

Ask the following:

- Was it difficult to make these decisions today?
- How did you work together as a group?
- Are there any strategies that would help us work better together as a group?
- What is one thing you appreciate about someone in this room even if you disagree with them?

CLOSE OUT (5 MINUTES)

Review the Day

Identify who wants to take on the following roles next time (icebreaker, check-in, pluses and deltas, leading the solidarity clap).

Pluses and Deltas

Solidarity Clap

Session 16

What Do We Need to Move Forward?

Objectives: During this session, the teens will decide what action/next steps are needed to start on their plan of action or campaign, work on those steps, and celebrate the end of TFLP training. At the end of this sessions, the participants will be able to:

- create a strategy for working together in the weeks to come outside of formal TFLP sessions; and
- celebrate the end of TFLP training.

Materials: Tape, poster board, markers, and materials from past sessions for the group reflection activity

Note: From this point onward, we recommend that the teens meet at least twice a week to work on the action campaign. At this point it is up to the teens and facilitators to decide how much formal involvement the facilitator will have or whether it will be up to the teens.

WELCOME AND CHECK-IN (10 MINUTES)

Check-in Circle

Review Agenda

Icebreaker

ACTIVITY ONE: SELF-REFLECTION (20 MINUTES)

Have the teens split into pairs. For two minutes, have one teen use only “I am” statements. For example, “I am athletic” or “I am [name].” Switch to the other teen for another two minutes. Then spend the next four minutes debriefing on how they felt and what they thought.

- Possible Prompts: What statements came to you first? Why do you think that is? How did your first few statements impact your later statements? For the teens who went first, how did it feel? For the teens who went second, did the answers of the first impact your answers? If so, how?

Afterward, have the teens repeat the exercise, but this time have them say statements related to the action plan, what they hope to achieve, and what role they hope to play as the curriculum ends and the campaign begins. These statements can be “I am,” “I hope,” or any similar configuration. Debrief with the same questions above. Allot two minutes for each teen and four

minutes for the debrief. Then give the teens the opportunity to share to the entire room. Have each teen say to the room the part of the action timeline they're most excited to work on and why.

ACTIVITY TWO: GROUP REFLECTION (20 MINUTES)

Place collective definitions, images drawn on big pieces of paper, collective rules, and other materials from the previous TFLP sessions on the board and around the room. Have the teens walk around the room reading their past work and reflecting on how far they've come.

ACTIVITY THREE: LOOKING FORWARD (25 MINUTES)

***Suggested Phrasing:** "This is our last formal TFLP session, after this you'll be a little more on your own. With that in mind, we're going to talk a little bit today about what this group will look like moving forward."*

List supports that will remain in place, such as an adult adviser, the larger support network already identified from previous sessions, meeting space, food, printer, and office supplies.

1. Explain the organizational structure of meetings. Below is an outline of last week's session:
Check-in question/icebreaker.
2. Identify the next event.
3. Break the event into action steps.
4. Assign action steps to working groups.
5. Break out into working groups. Have each working group:
 - Identify what we already have that could help us reach our action step.
 - Decide what is missing that we still need to reach our action step.
 - Reflect on if our larger support network help to fill those gaps.
 - Begin work in action steps.
 - Set a deadline for each action step.
6. Report back and put our action steps with people's names on the wall. Have someone take notes.
7. Regroup to our big picture and check each other.
8. Plan facilitators, notetaker, agenda, and date for our next meeting.
9. Close out with pluses and deltas.
10. Solidarity clap.

Ask whether the teens think this agenda format could be a useful way to facilitate future sessions. If not, what should we change? What about this format was useful? What can be improved? At our first meeting, we set up some community guidelines and collective values. (Remind the group what those were.) Should we make any changes moving forward?

Remind the teens that the work we are doing is important and valuable and will create change. However, parts of it will be thankless, parts of it will be hard, and, at times, it will feel like we aren't getting anywhere. It's just as important to stay true to our goals and values when things get tough. This isn't about the glamour. This work is about creating a better community.

Ask the teens, when things get tough, how can they work to support each other? Who can they go to for help?

Ask the youth the following questions: Are there any traditions that we should add to our group? We've always closed with a solidarity clap. Should we continue this? Should we have graduating members partner with the next round of TFLP students one-on-one as peer mentors? Should we eat certain foods to celebrate successes? How can we create a culture as TFLP graduates?

CLOSE OUT (5 MINUTES)

Review the Day

Remind the group of the roles for next time: who will lead the icebreaker, check-in, pluses and deltas, leading the solidarity clap? Are there any other roles that we should assign? Timekeeper? Who will write the agenda?

Pluses and Deltas

Solidarity Clap

GRADUATION CELEBRATION (40 MINUTES)

This time should be used to celebrate the end of TFLP and how much the teens have learned and grown. One option is to invite parents and community organizations and have a graduation ceremony with certificates of completion. Another option is to have a potluck. Use the time how to celebrate the hard work of the teen participants the best way for this group.

About the Authors

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