

Organizational Structure Document for Closing the Hunger Gap Network

Vision

We envision a time when all people can determine their own futures; when nutritious food is recognized as a human right; and when there is a political will to end hunger and its root causes. We envision ourselves as part of a growing, national network of collaborators and learners that engage with and support movements led by the people most impacted by hunger and poverty.

Purpose

Closing the Hunger Gap is a network of organizations and individuals working to expand hunger relief efforts beyond food distribution towards strategies that promote social justice and address the root causes of hunger.

Goals

- Build and support a grassroots effort of hunger relief organizations to shift from a charity model to a social justice model.
- Build a national presence to promote a collective voice of organizations and their constituents calling for food to be recognized as a human right.
- Support grassroots movements led by the people most impacted by the root causes of poverty and hunger.

Statements of Values

- We are committed to equity and social justice and seek to shift the imbalance of access to resources and opportunities.
- We believe that food is the foundation of relationships, community and culture and that it is essential to the health (physical, spiritual, emotional and mental well-being) of people and the environment.
- We recognize that poverty is not an individual's failing, but rather a systemic failing of our society and that changes to the system are needed to move beyond band-aid fixes to empower individuals and communities to remove barriers.
- We strive to better understand and find appropriate solutions to address the root causes of hunger and poverty.
- We embrace a network and culture that is led by and listens to the people most impacted by injustice, hunger and poverty (justice centered).
- We strive to nurture a community that builds collective power and shared learning.
- We recognize food as a human right, and we will champion this right within communities.
- We believe in honesty and transparency and will act to hold our leadership and each other accountable for honoring our vision and values. We recognize where we are

coming from, how we currently operate and are committed to learning, evolving and transforming.

- We seek to create a space that supports members in recognizing and facing uncomfortable truths in undertaking this work.

Membership

The Closing the Hunger Gap Network will be made up of organizations and individuals that endorse the vision, purpose and statements of values. This includes but is not limited to individuals with lived experience, non-profit organizations focused on anti-hunger, poverty, social justice or equity efforts, grassroots or community-based organizations, faith-based organizations or academic institutions committed to understanding the root causes or systems solutions to poverty and hunger (*funders, national organizations, think tanks? Workers, farmers, immigrants?*).

Network members can either be:

- **Core Members:** frontline or direct-service organizations that are led by individuals most impacted by food insecurity, poverty or social injustice, including women, youth, people of color, workers, farmers, indigenous peoples, immigrants, queer folks, people with dis/alter-abilities, trans people, and gender-nonconforming people. Activities, support and decision-making for the network will be centered around Core members.
- **Solidarity Member:** indirect service and research organizations that focus on anti-hunger, poverty, social justice or equity efforts. Solidarity members will contribute to the network while allowing Core members and individuals and communities most impacted by injustice to lead. This means taking a step back in terms of decision-making, listening to Core members and showing up in solidarity.

All members are responsible for:

- Acknowledging privileges and personal responsibility within the CTHG network.
- Upholding the vision, purpose and statements of values and contributing toward achieving the goals of CTHG

The benefits of being a member of CTHG are:

- Be supported by regional and national network that help to move towards a shift of social justice
- Be a part of a robust and passionate network that amplifies the impact and share successes of members
- Gain opportunities to participate in collective campaigns and actions
- Connect to a network of agencies to share skills, knowledge, best practice and assistance

Leadership Team

The CTHG Leadership Team will be comprised of both Core and Solidarity members. The roles and responsibilities however, will differ based on the type of member:

- **Core Members**

- **Roles and Responsibilities:**

- Participate in monthly leadership team calls
- Serve on the at least one leadership team committee (Governance, Membership Engagement, Regional Groups, Conference Planning, Strategic Working Groups)
- Contribute to decision-making about the strategic direction of network

- **Benefits**

- Greater decision-making power
- Opportunities to serve on committees or participate in Communities of Practice
- Broader attention and support for your social justice work
- Connections to a group of like-minded advocates and allies from across the country

- **Solidarity Members**

- **Roles and Responsibilities**

- Center and lift-up the leadership of Core Members
- Serve on at least one leadership team committee (Governance, Membership Engagement, Regional, Conference Planning, Strategic Working Groups)
- Make an annual financial contribution or help to secure funding for the network
- Take part in anti-racism and anti-oppression trainings
- Participate in at least X leadership team calls per year

- **Benefits**

- Be connected to a growing network of like-minded individuals working to reform emergency food
- Receive support and learn about best practices in this work
- Have access to information and educational opportunities on addressing systemic racism and addressing injustice in the emergency food system
- Reach a new audience with your work

Ways to Engage

- **Regional Groups**

CTHG members will have an opportunity to participate in regionally-defined networks that allow members to connect in between conferences to build relationships, partnerships, and regional initiatives. These regional initiatives will help to inform conversations happening at the national level, Communities of Practice and strategic working groups for the general CTHG network, and at the national conference.

Details:

- Each regional group will be led by a core team of members from the region that are also members of CTHG and a regional organizer.
- Regional groups will identify and build relationships with key institutional leaders within each region and help to promote and grow the CTHG network, advancing its goals, etc.
- Regional group members will have an opportunity to participate in a biannual regional gathering, regular virtual learning opportunities and trainings.
- Regional group members will also have an opportunity to participate in national communities of practice and strategic working groups of CTHG

- **Communities of Practice**

Communities of Practice offer an opportunity for CTHG members connect with others for shared learning and to build shared analysis through a range of interactions (webinars, trainings, in person, listserv, sharing of models or case studies) and to build shared analysis.

Details:

- There is no commitment to participate and members can self-select which events they would like to attend.
- Each community of practice will be led by co-conveners that will rotate facilitation responsibilities. Co-conveners do not need to be leadership members.
- COP topics and speakers will be generated from the CTHG biannual conference
- Each COP will convene a virtual meeting or webinar quarterly. Events will be advertised on the CTHG website

- **Strategic Working Groups**

Strategic Working Groups carry out the actions required to move forward the strategic priorities of the CTHG network as determined by the Leadership Team and informed by conference outcomes. This is ongoing work and changes as new ideas and actions emerge.

Details

- Strategic Working Groups have self-selected co-conveners that do not have to be Leadership Team members
- Strategic Working Groups are introduced and dissolved at the biannual CTHG conference in a general membership meeting
- Each Strategic Working Group meets virtually monthly or bi-monthly as determined by the working group.
- Each Strategic Working Group will have the agency and power to develop content and tactics to achieve the strategic goals. All strategies, goals, and public communication must be approved by the Leadership Team.

- **Conference Planning Team**

The conference planning team carries out and moves forward the strategic priorities developed by the conference evaluation outcomes and the Leadership Team. It provide support in transition between conference hosts and in planning the biannual conference.

Details

- Conference planning team convenes monthly virtually
- At least one Leadership Team member, one previous conference host, and one representative from each of the regional groups (?) will serve on the committee in addition to individuals from the general membership who've attended the most recent conference. The team convener can be any of these individuals.
- Criteria for participation is having either hosted a conference or attended a conference, ideally the most recently completed.
- This group can change each year to incorporate those who attended the most recent conference.