



Today's Speakers



Jasmine Griffin, MA, LPC

Training Officer

Switchboard



Aley Kent

Senior Technical Advisor, Food Security and Agriculture

International Rescue Committee



Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, you will be able to...

Describe

how food insecurity impacts newcomer wellness, stability, and integration

01

Explain

evidence-informed and community-based approaches that support food security among newcomer populations

02

Apply

culturally responsive and trauma-informed strategies when supporting clients experiencing food insecurity

03



Describe

how food insecurity impacts newcomer wellness,
stability, and integration

01

02

03

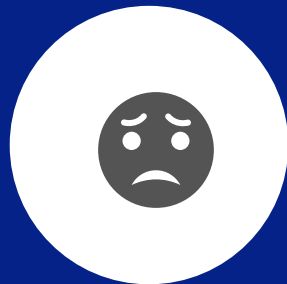


**When you hear the phrase
"food insecurity", what words or
feelings come to mind?**

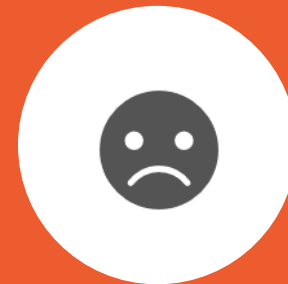
Ranges of Food Security



- Little or no indication of changes in diet
- Little or no changes in food intake



- One or two reported indication of changes in diet or food intake
- Anxiety over food sufficiency or shortage of food in the home



- Food insecurity without hunger
- Reports of reduced quality, variety, or desired diet
- Little to no indication of reduced food intake



- Food insecurity with hunger
- Reports of disrupted eating patterns
- Reduced food intake

High

Marginal

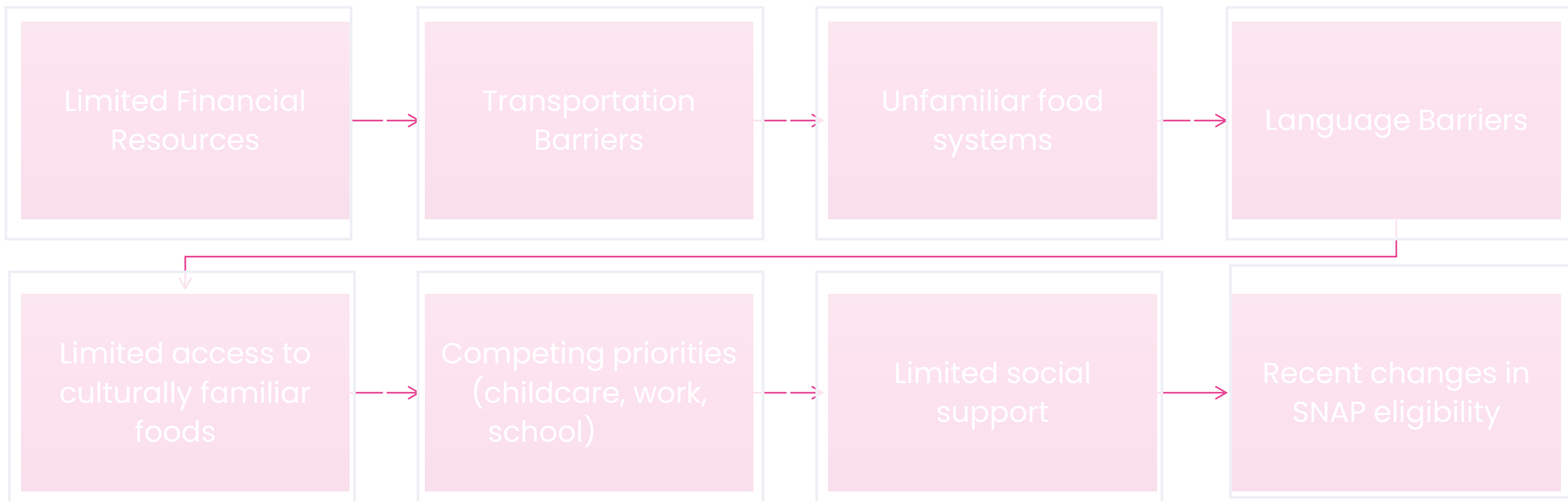
Low

Very Low

Source: USDA



Food Insecurity Through the Newcomer Experience



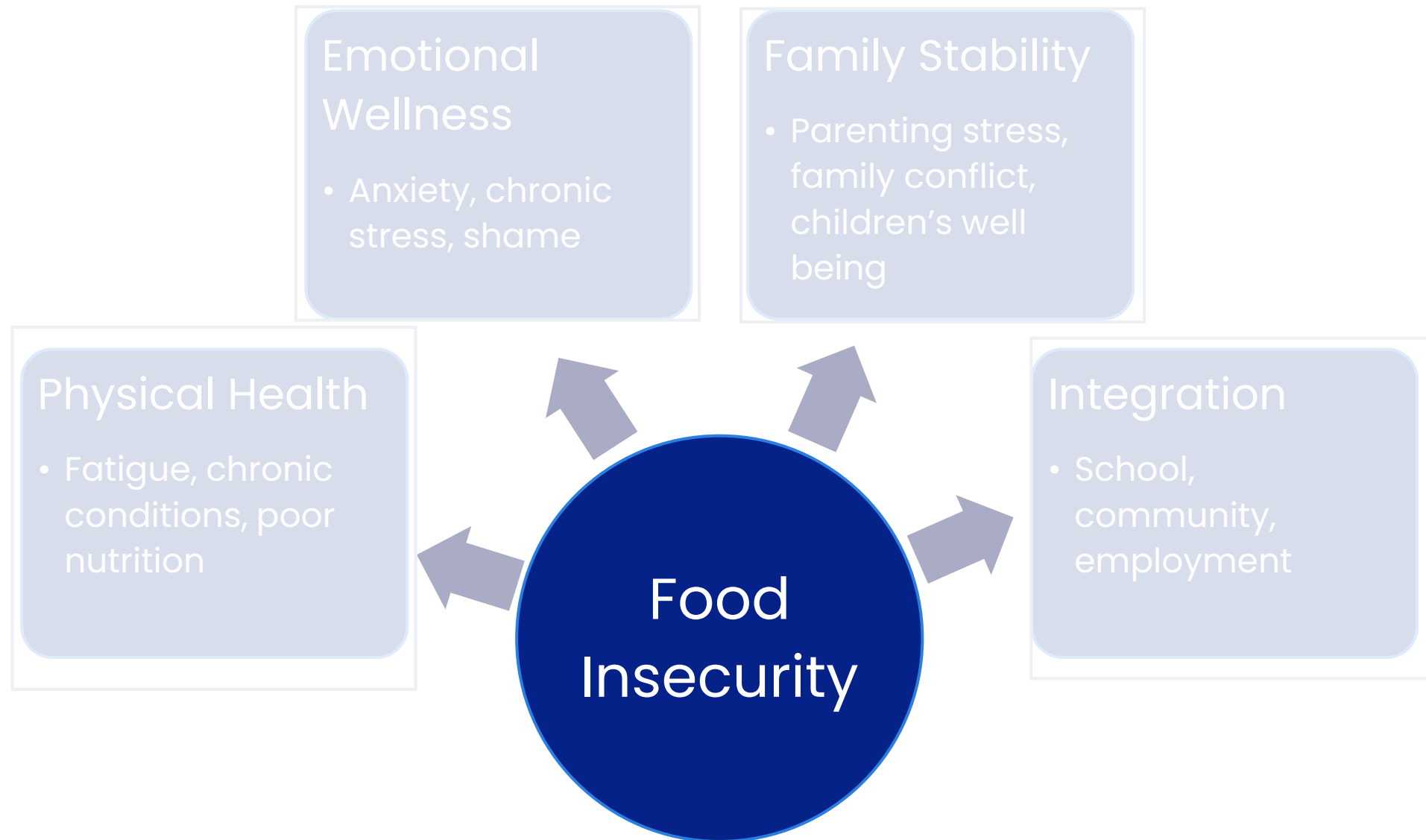
Contributing Factors of Food Insecurity





Which barrier do you see most often in your clients?

The Ripple Effect of Food Insecurity





Explain

evidence-informed and community-based approaches that support food security among newcomer populations

01

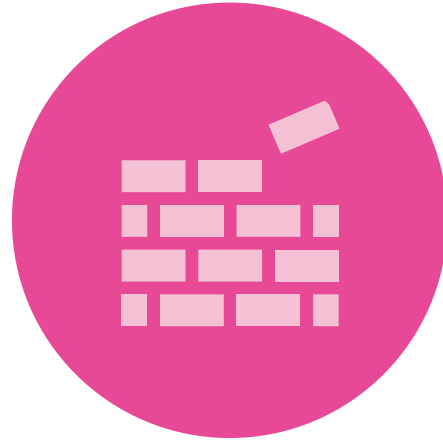
02

03

Realistic Approaches You Can Take



Connect



Build



Systems
Strengthening

Supporting Food Security



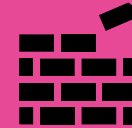
A continuum of Agency Action by IRC New Root's Technical Unit

Connect



Link newcomers to existing food resources and benefits.

Build



Develop agency-led food security initiatives.

Systems Strengthening



Strengthen local food systems through coalitions and networking and partnerships.



Which approach best describes your organization or program today?

Connect



Lighter Lift

- ☐ Build a list of local food resources
- ☐ Help eligible families access SNAP or WIC benefits
- ☐ Refer SNAP eligible clients to SNAP employment and training programs

Moderate or Heavy Lift

- ☐ Provide orientations to local food access points
- ☐ Ensure clients are accessing programs that help maximize their benefits
- ☐ Facilitate drop offs and deliveries of food from partner organizations

Connect: Build a list of local food resources

Research local food resources: pantries, gleaning opportunities, meal programs, etc. and verify current locations and hours.

Understand eligibility requirements and explain what clients can expect, including food options, language support and required documentation.

Identify local mutual aid organizations that help address food insecurity in their communities.

Use key resources: National Hunger Hotline, Find Food Database, Mutual Aid Hub, 2-1-1



Build



Moderate Lift

- Secure bulk food and coordinate for pick or distribution
- Connect clients with garden or farmland and resources

Heavy Lift

- Start a local market that accepts food benefits
- Become a SNAP Employment and Training Provider

Build: Secure Bulk Food and Coordinate for Pickup/Distribution



- **Connect with** local farmers, grocery stores and refugee owned businesses
- **Raise funds** to purchase culturally appropriate foods
- Work with your states' United Way organization to help **connect clients with alternative ways to access** culturally appropriate foods

A photograph showing two volunteers in a food distribution program. The volunteer on the right, wearing a tan apron and a watch, is placing a can into a clear plastic bin. The volunteer on the left, wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and a tan apron, is holding a bag of bread. In the foreground, there is a blue plastic crate filled with several cans. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the food distribution area.

Example: Food Distribution Program in Spokane, WA

Systems Strengthening



Lighter Lift

- Form an office-level food security task force
- **Network** with food coalitions local advocacy efforts

Moderate Lift

- **Partner** with food coalitions local advocacy efforts

Systems Strengthening: Form an Office-Level Food Security Task Force



- **Recruit** representatives from internal teams and community partners (i.e. local food pantries, food security programs, religious institutions, CBO, ECBOs)
 - Need 3–6 staff
- Schedule regular meetings to **discuss opportunities** for advocacy and action steps
 - Planning, follow up time for a committee point person
 - **Time commitment:** 1–2 hours a week or month
- Collaborate with local food security programs or organizations that are connected to local food system





The image shows a group of four women sitting around a white table in a modern office or meeting space. The woman in the center, with long brown hair and a grey blazer, is looking towards the camera. To her right, a Black woman with braided hair is smiling. In the foreground, the back of a woman with dark curly hair is visible. On the table are notebooks, a laptop, and a drink. The background features a large window and a wall covered in colorful sticky notes and diagrams. One diagram lists categories like 'Must Have', 'Should Have', 'Could Have', and 'Want to Have' with corresponding sticky notes. Another diagram shows a flowchart with terms like 'Extreme A Customer', 'Complete Profile', 'Assigns Burden', 'Connects App', 'Repeat Cycle', 'Feature Customer Story', and 'Connects to family/friend'.

Example: Food Security Task Force in Tucson, AZ



Example: Partnering for Impact and Resilience Seattle, WA



What's one realistic next step you could take to strengthen food security support in your community?



Apply

culturally responsive and trauma-informed strategies when supporting clients experiencing food insecurity.

01

02

03

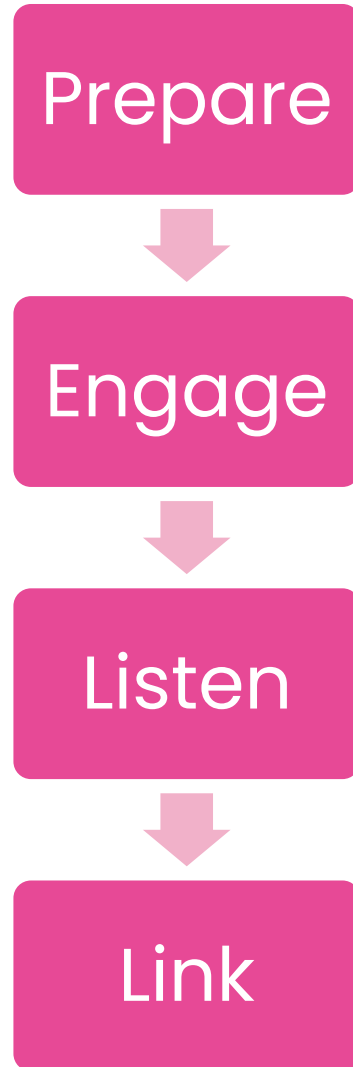


What makes conversations about food insecurity difficult?



What is one thing you wish you knew before discussing food insecurity with clients?

Your Role: A Trauma-Informed Communication Framework



Trauma-Informed and Culturally Responsive Practice

Trauma-Informed

- Safety
- Trust
- Empowerment
- Choice
- Collaboration

Culturally Responsive

- Curiosity
- Respect
- Food Traditions
- Language
- Religious/Family Preferences
- Allergies

Prepare

Preparation includes understanding both practical barriers and cultural considerations

01

Know

available resources

04

Identify

culturally appropriate options

02

Consider

transportation

05

Reflect

on assumptions

03

Think

about language access



Engage

- ➔ Validate the client's experience
- ➔ Use Open Ended Questions
- ➔ Avoid Assumptions
- ➔ Respect Privacy



Engage – Instead of:

"Do you need/have food"?

Why haven't you gone to the grocery store?

The children have to eat you can get in trouble for not feeding them.

"All refugees do this for survival. They are just manipulating me and my team to get food."

Engage – Try:

“What foods are you missing the most right now?”

“Many families tell us grocery shopping has become difficult lately. How has that been for your family?”

OR

“How do you get to and from the grocery store?”

“When was the last time you went grocery shopping?”

Clients may need resources to meet their immediate needs and may be unsure of whom to trust.

Resist thinking that clients' behaviors are manipulative.



Listen



**Financial
Strain**

**Transportation
Concerns**

**Isolation or
other Mental
Health
Concerns**

**Health
Related
Concerns**

**Housing
Concerns**

Past Trauma

**Cultural &
Dietary
Preferences**

Link



01

Conversation

Listen to the clients' needs and offer choices

02

Resource

Make referrals and warm handoffs.

03

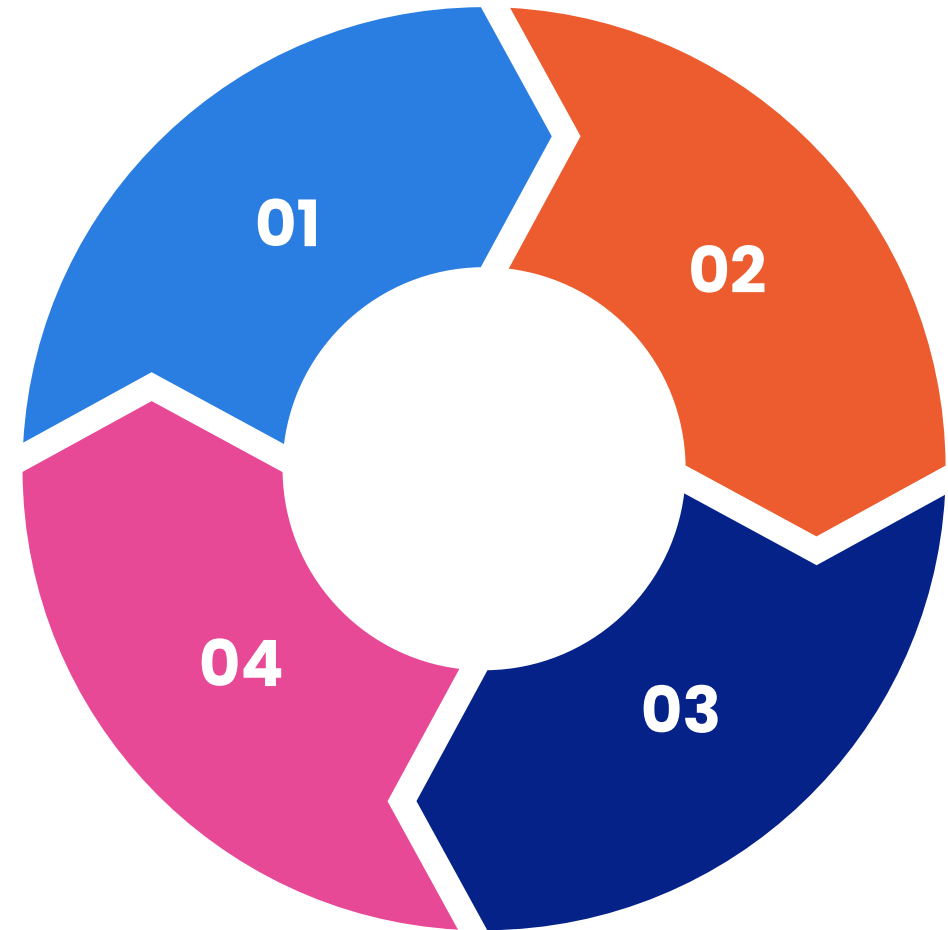
Navigation

Explain to clients what to expect (e.g., cost, transportation, hours of operation, etc.)

04

Follow Up

Check on whether the connections was successful



Preserve Dignity Through *Choice*

- Ask about culturally familiar foods and family preferences
- Explore religious, cultural, and dietary practices that may influence food choices.
- Explore transportation
- Respect clients as experts on what works best for their family
- Less helpful: “We have one food pantry you can use.”
- **More Helpful:** “Let’s look at a few options together and see what best fits your family’s needs.”





Learning Objectives

Now you are able to...

Describe

how food insecurity impacts newcomer wellness, stability, and integration

01

Explain

evidence-informed and community-based approaches that support food security among newcomer populations

02

Apply

culturally responsive and trauma-informed strategies when supporting clients experiencing food insecurity.

03

Recommended Resources

- Blog Post: [Six Key Findings About New Americans and Food Insecurity](#)
- Blog Post: [Find Food Resources for Newcomers in Your City, in Your State, and at the Federal Level](#)
- Podcast: [A Path to Food Security & Nutrition for Refugees & Immigrants in the U.S: Building an Evidence Base](#)
- Information Guide: [Agricultural Program Development for Newcomers in the U.S.](#)
- Toolkit: [Measuring Household Food Security in the United States](#)
- Evidence Summary: [What works to increase food security in newcomer populations?](#)



Six Key Findings About New Americans and Food Insecurity

Stay Connected

✉ Switchboard@Rescue.org

🖱 www.SwitchboardTA.org

📺 @SwitchboardTA

📺 @SwitchboardTA



The IRC received competitive funding through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Grant #90RB0053. The project is 100% financed by federal funds. The contents of this document are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

