

EXPANDING OUR REACH

KALAMAZOO COUNTY HUNGER-FREE COMMUNITY COALITION

The Kalamazoo County Hunger-Free Community Coalition is on a mission to make systemic improvements to food security and nutrition among county residents. The Coalition is made

up of over 30 local organizations that work collectively on anti-hunger projects. Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes provides backbone support to the Coalition by facilitating meetings and serving as the fiscal intermediary. Depending on the specific project, Coalition members provide staff, resources or knowledge to leverage existing food resources so that our community sees maximum benefit. If the Coalition identifies unmet needs or service gaps, it works with local partners to find creative, local solutions to meet community needs. While the Coalition's steering committee meets quarterly, specific work groups meet more frequently, depending on the specific projects underway.

Over the past year, the Coalition has focused on:

- Strengthening healthy food resources for the community.
- Organizing community support to bring the Double Up Food Bucks (DUFEB) Program to local grocery stores.
- Exploring the potential to increase kids' meals through federal food assistance programs.
- Continuing to strengthen the Summer Feeding Service Program for youth throughout Kalamazoo County.
- Educating the community about new federal work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD) to receive food assistance.
- Working with WMed students to better identify and combat food insecurity during pediatric visits.
- Participating in a pilot program through the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics for Coalition strategic planning. The Coalition is one of only three entities awarded funding by the Academy for this purpose.
- Collecting data to help with mapping underserved areas of Kalamazoo County.

The Coalition's success in strengthening food assistance programs, stretching the food budgets of low-income residents, and providing nutritious meals to local youth is only possible through the collective contribution of each community organization and partner who generously contributes toward a community plan to solve local hunger.

