

**UAMS News Bureau**

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**UAMS Joins with 24 Community Partners  
to Address Food Insecurity in NWA**

FAYETTEVILLE — Twenty-four Northwest Arkansas organizations are banding together with the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) to help break down barriers that prevent equitable access to healthy food.

The Northwest Arkansas Food Insecurity Community of Practice (NWA CoP), launched last year by the UAMS Office of Community Health and Research with support from the Walmart Foundation, is guided by a diverse stakeholder advisory board of individuals who are currently experiencing food insecurity or have experienced food insecurity in the recent past.

By sharing skills and experiences, the NWA CoP is cultivating new strategies to address recurring problems related to food insecurity in Northwest Arkansas. Below is a list of participating organizations.

**Northwest Arkansas Food Insecurity Community of Practice Organizations**

Arkansas Children’s Northwest	FoodCorps Arkansas	Ozark Regional Transit
Arkansas Immigrant Defense	Full Circle Food Pantry	Saint James Missionary Baptist
Berryville Community Center	Little Free Pantry	Salvation Army
Canopy NWA	Manna Center	Samaritan Community Center
Chestnut Meadows	Marshallese Educational Initiative	Seeds That Feed
Cobblestone Farms	Northwest Arkansas Food Bank	Sunshine School
Community Clinic	Oasis of NWA	Tri Cycle Farms
DHS Division of Children & Family Services	Open Arms	Urban League of the State of Arkansas Young Professionals

“This group of organizations represents a diverse cross-section of Northwest Arkansas’s food insecurity resources,” said Emily English, DrPH, MPS, assistant professor in the UAMS Office of Community Health and Research. “They bring experience, expertise and dedication to ensuring all of our community members have access to the food they need to thrive.”

Food insecurity is defined as a lack of consistent access to food that is safe, adequate, culturally appropriate and nutritious. It can be a temporary or long-lasting condition. According to Feeding America, more than 13% of households in Northwest Arkansas are food insecure. In Arkansas, 16.6% of households are food insecure, compared to 10.5% nationally.

The organizations who comprise the NWA CoP will work toward reducing food insecurity in Northwest Arkansas by increasing access to SNAP and WIC benefits; improving equitable and inclusive healthy food access; evolving food recovery and distribution models; and helping organizations collaborate to respond to rapidly changing circumstances that lead to food insecurity.

“This community of practice has such a wealth of knowledge,” said Marla Sappington of the Manna Center. “Our hearts and minds are working to help others who don’t have the resources to meet every day needs. I’m so blessed to be a part of the group, to learn from others and to help create a safety net for our community members.”

For more information about the Northwest Arkansas Food Insecurity Community of Practice and its participating organizations, visit [nwa.uams.edu/chr/cop](http://nwa.uams.edu/chr/cop).

UAMS is the state's only health sciences university, with colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Professions and Public Health; a graduate school; a hospital; a main campus in Little Rock; a Northwest Arkansas regional campus in Fayetteville; a statewide network of regional campuses; and seven institutes: the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, Jackson T. Stephens Spine & Neurosciences Institute, Harvey & Bernice Jones Eye Institute, Psychiatric Research Institute, Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging, Translational Research Institute and Institute for Digital Health & Innovation. UAMS includes UAMS Health, a statewide health system that encompasses all of UAMS' clinical enterprise. UAMS is the only adult Level 1 trauma center in the state. *U.S. News & World Report* recognized UAMS Medical Center as a Best Hospital for 2021-22; ranked its ear, nose and throat program among the top 50 nationwide for the third year; and named five areas as high performing — colon cancer surgery, diabetes, hip replacement, knee replacement and stroke. *Forbes* magazine ranked UAMS as seventh in the nation on its Best Employers for Diversity list. UAMS also ranked in the top 30% nationwide on *Forbes*’ Best Employers for Women list and was the only Arkansas employer included. UAMS has 3,047 students, 873 medical residents and fellows, and six dental residents. It is the state's largest public employer with more than 10,000 employees, including 1,200 physicians who provide care to patients at UAMS, its regional campuses, Arkansas Children's, the VA Medical Center and Baptist Health. Visit [www.uams.edu](http://www.uams.edu) or [www.uamshealth.com](http://www.uamshealth.com). Find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

The UAMS Northwest Regional Campus includes 288 medical, pharmacy, nursing and health professions students, 64 medical and pharmacy residents, two sports medicine fellows, and 1,000 community-based faculty. The campus has nine clinics including a student-led clinic and physical, occupational and speech therapy. Faculty conduct

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