

Q1 Please provide your contact information below.

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Q2 Please describe your company or organizations overall goals and mission.

Comfort Food Community is dedicated to changing lives through the power of good food. We offer 2 emergency food relief pantries, connect individuals to services and health care, provide health education, and conduct a county wide produce delivery program. Guests are welcome to visit weekly. Our pantries are designed to accommodate preference, facilitate warm interactions, and offers local produce in a farmer's market format.

Q3 Please indicate which category your organization falls under.

**Community Based
Organization**

Q4 Innovation Executive Summary. Please describe the innovation, and how it addresses the social determinants of health. Please identify how the innovation addresses the 6 innovation criteria (i.e. ROI, scaleability, feasibility, evidence based support for innovation, relevance to the Medicaid population and speed to market).

Our services primarily target food insecurity. Seven out of ten chronic illnesses are caused by diet and lifestyle. We offer vegetables, fruits, beneficial yogurts, and other perishable items to combat poverty's dietary restrictions. We provide diverse, free, and locally grown produce. To assist in familiarizing guests with new types of food, we offer samples, resource recipes, host public education events, and provide individual nutrition counseling within the pantry. We have connected with local providers to offer a vegetable prescription program and are developing a medically tailored meal program. Studies attest to an improved diet's ability to decrease HbA1C levels, assist in medication adherence, and significantly improved quality of life. Medically Tailored Meals are particularly successful in decreasing the cost of care and re-hospitalization rates. Other programs have implemented this strategy to high cost populations such as HIV positive individuals and those suffering from Congestive Heart Failure. The majority of who we serve is on a form of assistance and several are limited to a social security or disability budget. Chronic illnesses are rampant and the destructive effects of toxic stress are apparent. We are able to alter not only economic stability and environmental social determinants of health, but also social and community factors. Our pantry's design and outreach programming contribute to an intimate and accepting ambiance. Our guests develop close relationships with our staff and volunteers. They share their lives with us. We offer skill sharing and recreation during wait times, provide community resource referrals, and offer home visits. Our health education efforts involve community wide lessons and a chronic illness peer support group. Social isolation is a noxious component of poverty. We aim to break down these walls and provide a respectful, accepting space for all. The return on investment can be witnessed in fewer hospitalizations, ER visits, connecting individuals to health insurance and primary care providers, and improved medical adherence. Our interventions are able to be conducted on larger scales. Key components are community health workers accommodating population size, developing connections to farms, recruiting and training volunteers, and investing in infrastructure such as freezers, refrigerators, a USDA certified kitchen, and cooking supplies. Emphasizing dietary changes and providing a welcoming, understanding environment has an instantaneous impact on a client's well-being. Health measurements take longer to track, but blood sugar, cortisol levels, and blood cholesterol have been lowered over 3 and 6 month studies.

Q5 Was your innovation implemented? If so, please explain when, the number of people impacted, and the results.

Yes (please specify when and the estimated number of people impacted):

Our emergency food relief services began in 2014. Our network development to farmers and our fresh food delivery truck has been in place since 2016. We added social services and public health education in 2017 and are now incorporating the Produce Prescription program. We have impacted over 15,000 lives through our services.

Q6 Please identify the SDH Domain that your innovation addresses. (Select all that apply.)

Social and Community Context,
Health and Health Care,
Neighborhood and Environment,
Economic Stability

Q7 I give the Department of Health the right to share the information submitted in this application publicly (for example: on the DOH website). I understand that there is no monetary reward/reimbursement for my submission or for attending the summit should my innovation be selected.

I consent to have my innovation shared

