Wyoming Hunger Initiative has a simple mission: to end childhood hunger in Wyoming.

We believe childhood hunger in Wyoming is a problem that can be solved. We work to prevent food insecurity by increasing awareness and support for the work of local anti-hunger organizations statewide and by advocating for a future where no child faces the school day on an empty stomach.

Nourished kids, healthy families, and thriving communities: that’s the goal of Wyoming Hunger Initiative.
Long before I became the First Lady, I learned from a friend about children in Sheridan County who struggled with food insecurity. I’ve never forgotten about those children, and have made it a priority to work toward a future where hunger no longer exists in our state.

I spent the better part of my first year as First Lady traveling around the state to learn more about the programs and organizations already in place to reduce food insecurity in Wyoming. I learned about the challenges these programs face in their tireless work and how I might be of service without reinventing the wheel. Witnessing these grassroots efforts to fight food insecurity helped me understand that the greatest need of all was a powerful advocate. Shining a light on their work to raise awareness, funding, and support would be the work of my initiative; Wyoming Hunger Initiative launched officially in October 2019.

We are grateful for the donations that the Wyoming Hunger Initiative has already received; these donations have made our newly launched grant program possible. Organizations from across the state are eligible to apply for funds to supplement their infrastructure or support start-up costs. Wyoming Hunger Initiative grants will always be invested in local communities across the state. We’ve also been hard at work developing innovative partnerships that will further battle the challenge of food insecurity in Wyoming. *Food From the Field*, a collaboration with the Wyoming Game & Fish Department and Wyoming Department of Agriculture will facilitate donations of game meat from hunters to local food pantries. *Wyoming Angel Accounts* will work with partners and stakeholders to seek a long-term solution to the ever-growing problem of school lunch debt that plagues so many of our Wyoming neighbors.

Lastly, my Board of Directors and I created the Hunger Champions Circle to solicit funds for Wyoming Hunger Initiative. Membership in this group of invested advocates will further strengthen our network of anti-hunger warriors. Their donation will help fund the work of Wyoming Hunger Initiative as they develop a deep understanding of the effort to end childhood hunger in Wyoming. By inviting more advocates to the fight, we can make a difference that will have an impact for generations to come.

I invite you to review the ways you can be involved with Wyoming Hunger Initiative. My hope is that everyone will be aware, care, and share with regard to hunger in Wyoming. I truly believe childhood hunger in Wyoming can be solved, together. The partnerships we create are an investment in our youngest generation that will impact future generations in ways we can’t yet imagine. We are able to move the needle because of your generosity.

Thank you.

Jennie Gordon
Nearly 24,000 children in Wyoming struggle with food insecurity.

That isn’t OK with us.

Research has shown that children who suffer from food insecurity—even once in their lifetime—demonstrate poorer overall health 10-15 years later. In addition to health outcomes, food insecurity has an impact on academic achievement, graduation rates, and economic well-being. Wyoming Hunger Initiative knows that childhood hunger is a problem that can be solved, but it must first be understood.

Cheyenne’s Friday Food Bag Foundation provides 900 bags of food per week to Laramie County School Districts #1 and #2 schoolchildren who face greater risk of food insecurity over weekends, at a cost of $183,500 per year. The organization is funded entirely by charitable donations.
Wyoming Hunger Facts

Hunger is often an invisible problem, and most people are surprised to learn the extent to which it affects Wyoming children and families.

1 in 6 kids struggles with hunger; no county in the state is immune.

Summer meal sites serve only 18% of the meals kids need when school is out for the summer.

Food insecurity disproportionately affects low income residents; 13% of Wyoming children under the age of 18 fell below the poverty line in Wyoming in 2017.

Since 2010, the number of students graduating who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch has been at least 11 percentage points lower than for those who aren’t eligible. Food insecurity extends beyond school lunch and has measurable impact on academic performance. It is hard to focus on an empty stomach.

Americans waste approximately 67 million tons of food per year, at a retail value of $160 billion. Only one Wyoming county has an active food rescue program, which has rescued over one million pounds of food since opening its doors in 2013. Rescuing salvageable food and diverting it to those in need has proven to have a significant impact on food insecurity.

Demand on Wyoming Food Bank of the Rockies food pantries increased 100% immediately after the COVID-19 outbreak began, highlighting the lack of margin many Wyoming households face.

Allowing Wyoming kids to go hungry is simply not who we are, and we won’t rest until food insecurity is solved.
There are grassroots efforts in every single Wyoming county dedicated to reducing childhood hunger and combating food insecurity. Wyoming Hunger Initiative works to support and bring awareness to the work of Wyoming organizations—from food pantries to food rescues, “backpack” programs to local soup kitchens—that are making a difference in the lives of our Wyoming neighbors every single day. We strive to provide much-needed financial contributions from individuals, corporate sponsors, and community-wide fundraising.


Childhood hunger is a problem that can be solved, together.
"The blessings come back around—our community is a gracious one."

SIERRA MITCHELL, AFTON FOOD PANTRY
Wyoming is full of innovative thinkers. When you give to Wyoming Hunger Initiative, you enable Wyoming solutions to Wyoming challenges. Grants allow organizations to implement new ideas, partnerships, and programs that make a real impact on local communities. We know that there is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all solution to childhood hunger, and Wyoming Hunger Initiative is committed to supporting the inspiring anti-hunger warriors who fight every day to find the best answer for their community and for generations to come.
A unique partnership between the University of Wyoming and the Afton Food Pantry was forged when UW reached out to the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners to see if the pantry might be interested in utilizing the last remaining funds of an innovative grant to grow produce with a geodome. The team couldn’t say YES fast enough, and the new geodome was constructed in the summer of 2019 and is currently undergoing preparations to begin growing fresh produce that can be utilized in food boxes this year. Another valuable partnership is planned with students from Swift Creek High School, who will help manage the new geodome garden with board member and teacher Don McAdams.

OUR COMMITMENT

Wyoming Hunger Initiative grants are an investment in positive change, a call to action, and a powerful tool for advocacy.

Grant money awarded by Wyoming Hunger Initiative can be used for:

- equipment to expand capability (refrigerators, tables, storage cases, etc.)
- long-term projects that promote self-sufficiency and increase food security
- solutions that encourage systematic change with regard to local food access
- educational programs
- nonprofit startups (excluding salaries)
- crisis response funding

Wyoming Hunger Initiative is committed to awarding grants in every Wyoming county, because we know hunger does not discriminate.

A little funding and a lot of creativity goes a long way.
Wyoming Hunger Initiative depends upon corporate giving to fund innovative partnerships, develop long-term solutions, and ensure operational success. Grants are funded through corporate giving; our ability to make an impact is directly linked to the generosity of our partners in business and industry. Wyoming Hunger Initiative understands the importance of stewarding funds donated for community-based anti-hunger efforts; these funds allow local organizations to strengthen their community’s safety net. In times of crisis, this safety net needs even more support. For example, increased demand on resources created by the COVID-19 crisis requires a nimble response; corporate donations enable allocation of emergency funds that make an immediate impact on Wyoming families. Wyoming Hunger Initiative believes in Wyoming solutions to Wyoming challenges.

**ESSENTIAL CORPORATE GIVING**

**UTILIZING WYOMING’S RESOURCES**

Stemming from the First Lady’s love of hunting and helping those in need, the Wyoming Hunger Initiative has teamed up with the Wyoming Game & Fish Department, Wyoming Department of Agriculture, and processors from around the state to eliminate barriers currently in place to prevent game meat being donated to food pantries. Both resident and non-resident hunters from all over the world enjoy hunting in Wyoming but don’t necessarily want to take all their meat home. *Food From the Field* enables hunters to donate their meat to local processors who in turn will prepare it for local organizations, where it may then be distributed to people in need. Funds raised to support this program will be utilized for processing fees not covered by the hunter, as well as infrastructure to support this program.
AMBASSADORS FOR THE MOVEMENT

Wyoming Hunger Initiative is building a team of dedicated ambassadors who will mobilize fundraising, awareness, and action in their communities across the state. The funds committed through membership in the Hunger Champions Circle will provide ongoing support for the Wyoming Hunger Initiative mission. Members of the Hunger Champions Circle receive quarterly reports of program successes, challenges, and goals; they also are invited to participate in an annual University of Wyoming football game presentation to raise awareness about childhood hunger in Wyoming. Developing an army of passionate anti-hunger advocates has the potential to positively impact generations of Wyoming families to come.

ELIMINATING DEBT NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

75% of school districts in Wyoming have reported school lunch debt and 40% say their debt is growing. Currently, there is no ongoing work related to solving the school lunch debt crisis in the state. Corporate investments in Wyoming Angel Accounts will be returned to the local county of choice with a tax deductible donation. Wyoming Hunger Initiative is committed to working with school districts to determine the amount a family can pay in the form of a payment plan prior to receiving matching funds. Wyoming Hunger Initiative will continue to evaluate, analyze, and brainstorm long-term solutions to the challenge of lunch debt.

Become a Wyoming Hunger Initiative partner today!
Discuss your donation today by calling (307) 777-7398.
Food is national security.
Food is economy.
It is employment, energy, history.
Food is everything.

CHEF JOSÉ ANDRÉS