



## Food Advocacy Grants Program



According to the USDA, 11% of United States rural households qualified as food insecure in 2021. What's more, the advocacy organization Feeding America indicates that 9 out of 10 of the US counties with the highest rates of food insecurity in 2022 were rural counties. With the support of the BRANDT Foundation, the 4-H Food Advocacy Grants program has provided significant support for Illinois youth-led advocacy and service-learning.

Illinois 4-H is a leader in engaging young people in the process of "learning by doing." We know from experience that experiential learning is an essential part of an effective education program. With the generous support of the BRANDT Foundation, Illinois 4-H has significantly grown its capacity to support innovative, culturally responsive and service-learning based approaches to addressing food insecurity in Illinois. After the successful launch of our Food Advocacy Grant program in 2021, we are introducing a new generation to the skills, mindsets and support required to be a successful advocate for change in their community.

With the support of the BRANDT Foundation, Illinois 4-H was able to continue to support youth-led food advocacy projects that address food security and food access through civic engagement and community involvement. Grant applications came in from around Illinois and represented eight counties; six urban and two rural communities. The variety of proposals we received was impressive, including food packaging, direct food assistance for middle and high-school students, nutrition education and community gardens. Illinois 4-H was able to partner successfully with 4-H staff statewide to support 250 youth in leadership roles to deliver assistance to 4,800 people statewide.

After submitting a budget proposal, grant applicants received financial assistance to acquire the materials and resources necessary for a successful project. Additionally, once selected, grant recipients worked alongside local 4-H staff to receive the guidance and mentorship they needed to ensure their project was a success. With another year of growth in our Food Advocacy Grant program, we are confident that IL 4-H will continue to be a leader in food advocacy, food access, and food security programming that focuses on the voices of young people while providing them the opportunity to strengthen their capacity for leadership now and into the future.

As of the end of 2022, the Food Advocacy Grant program has engaged and served over 6,000 youth leaders and community members. Continued support for these amazing young people will ensure that Illinois 4-H will continue to remain a relevant partner for the development of more food secure communities throughout the state.

### WHAT'S NEXT?

With the generous support of our partners, donors and 4-H families, we plan to continue offering applications open to any young person in Illinois with a plan for how they can create greater food access where they live. Youth leaders who have a project accepted will also receive an opportunity to receive a scholarship to Illinois 4-H events on campus at UIUC such as the 2024 Illini Summer Academies.

“ I learned that I can accomplish anything I set my mind to. People are willing to help!

They just need someone to organize the community around something that matters.”

4-H Youth Leader - White County



## Grant Highlights

12 New Grant Projects

250 Youth in Service-Learning Leadership

4,800 People Served Statewide by 4-H Youth

Outreach to Rural and Urban Communities Impacted by Food Insecurity



