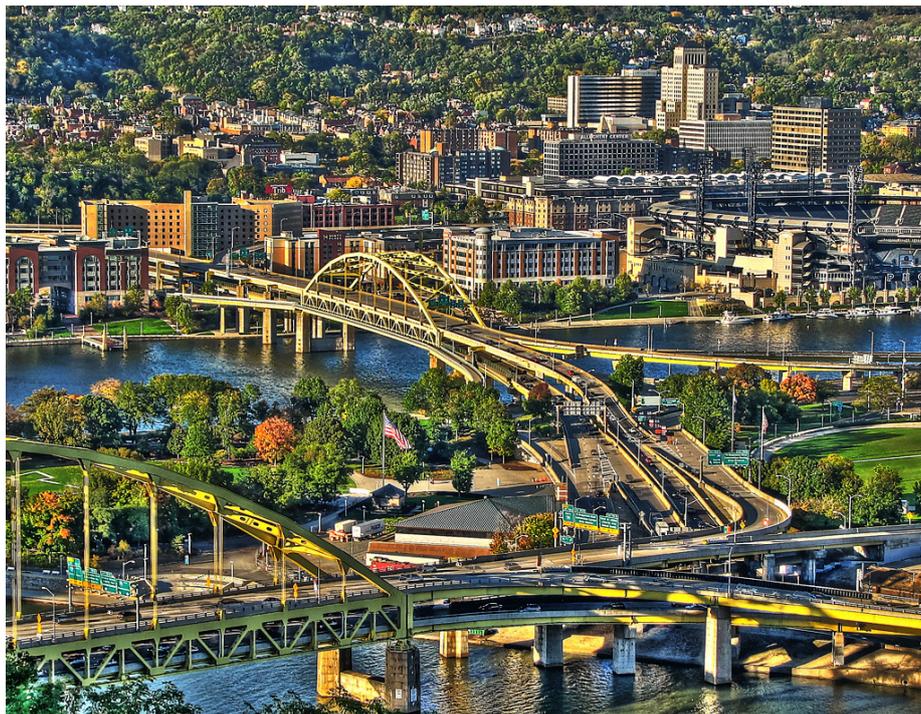

RESTORING THE BALANCE OF POWER

CULTIVATING LEADERS WITH LIVED EXPERIENCES
IN POVERTY TO CREATE LASTING SOCIAL CHANGE
IN PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA



**CHESTERFIELD POLKEY
BILL EMERSON NATIONAL
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Executive Summary

Since 1987, Just Harvest has advocated for progressive policy and mobilized citizens to eliminate hunger and poverty in Allegheny County.¹ The non-profit has collaborated with local schools, peer-nonprofits, and community members who have lived experience in food insecurity to spur rallies, meet with legislators, and develop community-oriented projects. Over its thirty-two year history, Just Harvest has formed long-term coalitions alongside its anti-hunger partners to take on challenges from welfare funding cuts in the 1990s to contemporary attacks on the social safety net. The voices and knowledge of low-income residents have always bolstered and informed Just Harvest's grassroots organizing efforts. In 2018, staff at Just Harvest identified a new avenue for connecting people with lived experience in poverty with the organization's greater advocacy efforts: the organization's Food Stamp Assistance Program.

In addition to community organizing, Just Harvest operates direct service-oriented programming. The Food Stamp Assistance Program helps over 1200 Allegheny County residents annually apply for and receive a monthly financial supplement to use to buy groceries.² The SNAP program--the program still commonly referred to as Food Stamps--enables low-income families to buy food at grocery stores, corner shops, and farmers' markets. Through the Food Stamp Assistance Program, Just Harvest ensures that residents in the Greater Pittsburgh area are able to acquire the government benefits to which they are entitled. As recipients of public assistance, these clients know firsthand the importance of a social safety net as well as the difficult situation that hunger and poverty produce.

In 2018, Just Harvest staff decided to reshape the Food Stamp Assistance relationship from a client-service dynamic to an advocacy partnership; a relationship where the families Just Harvest assists are invited to take action on the issues important to them. To commence this shift, the organization moved to contract a Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellow. In the fall of 2018, I was tasked with creating opportunities and developing mechanisms for Just Harvest Food Stamp clients to become involved in grassroots community organizing. Specifically, I had to revise the ways in which the Food Assistance Program staff, interns, and volunteers communicate and interact with the people they serve. My work included meeting with food stamp clients and asking them directly about what and how they want to contribute. Additionally, I talked to staff at anti-hunger organizations, community development programs, and activist groups to identify innovative ways community organizations engage with their constituents.

¹ Just Harvest. "Mission & Principles." Just Harvest.

² Just Harvest. "2017 Annual Report." Issuu. May 28, 2018.

Drawing from Just Harvest's decades of community organizing work, qualitative research involving Food Stamp clients, and peer review of different advocacy and capacity-building organizations around the country, this report recommends a new community-focused leadership development program at Just Harvest. The organization's ability to collaborate with low-income Allegheny County residents would be supported by cultivating leaders with lived experience in poverty and working with them to advance social change in the Greater Pittsburgh area.

By coupling analysis of Just Harvest's organizing past with an evaluation of leadership and advocacy development programs around the country, this report poses a new framework for integrating community members with lived experiences of poverty and hunger into the larger struggle against inequality. Specifically, this report poses five recommendations for Just Harvest:

- Develop a leadership development program using insights gained from the report
- Raise funds to hire a full-time Client & Community Engagement Specialist
- Raise funds for future transportation, child-care, and food costs for programming
- Raise funds for program stipends and rewards for leadership development graduation
- Work towards the development of a board of low-income residents to assist programming

In this report, I outline the ways in which Just Harvest can draw from its own experience with leadership development as well as the successes and challenges that organizations around the country have faced. This report also includes some materials such as a job description, examples of leadership development syllabi, and a chart of all the peer-organizations researched.

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The Emerson National Hunger Fellows Program is a social justice program that trains, inspires, and sustains leaders. Fellows gain field experience fighting hunger and poverty through placements in community-based organizations across the country, and policy experience through placements in Washington, D.C. The program bridges community-based efforts and national public policy, and fellows develop as effective leaders in the movement to end hunger and poverty. The Emerson Program supports a diversity of local and national approaches to eliminate hunger, poverty and social inequality, particularly racism. We seek to craft successful and mutually beneficial partnerships between Fellows and partner organizations while developing a new generation of hunger and poverty leaders. Fellows support partner organizations with program development, research, evaluation, outreach, organizing, and advocacy projects.

Founded in 1986, **Just Harvest** educates, empowers, and mobilizes people to eliminate hunger, poverty, and economic injustice in our communities by influencing public policy, engaging in advocacy, and connecting people to public benefits. We are guided by the understanding that hunger is a symptom of poverty and that poverty is a product of social and economic injustice. Rather than charity, public policies which respond to these conditions and to the needs of low-income people are the best approaches to the elimination of hunger and poverty.

Introduction

Across the United States, anti-hunger organizations have occupied the stressful position of supporting families left behind from cuts to the federal safety net. Fortunately, since the 1980s, there has been an outgrowth of food banks and pantries ready to catch those who have fallen into hard times.³ At the same time, advocacy-driven nonprofits have lobbied policymakers to maintain programs like SNAP and refundable tax credits that provide a financial base for families in poverty.⁴ Both types of organizations have resulted in millions of residents being able to provide food for their families. However, these nonprofits tend to suffer from a crucial deficiency; there is a paucity of people with lived experience in impoverished conditions who have positions of leadership in these organizations. In a survey⁵ of 71 different anti-hunger organizations (food banks, advocacy organizations, community action agencies) conducted by the nonprofit *WhyHunger*, only 40 percent of groups were membership-based. Only one group recruited members from their own program participants which could include food stamp applicants, food pantry clients, etc. Most boards of directors consist of business leaders and other nonprofit leaders, few of whom actually live or have lived through poverty.⁶

The lack of representation has resulted in an anti-hunger agenda dominated by strengthening the charity sector and by only advocating for programs like SNAP. Of the 61 organizations that reported undertaking some form of policy advocacy, only 13 worked on campaigns around minimum or living wage policy. At the same time, the majority of advocacy work does not involve low-income residents in any leadership role. Few anti-hunger organizations actively recruit low-income residents to take on leadership roles; organizations are more likely to invite clients to volunteer rather than serve on a board.⁷ Despite the survey only representing a small sample of the anti-hunger landscape, it highlights a significant gap in advocacy work. Low involvement among low-income residents can lead to organizations *not* advocating for long-term policies that will result in less client usage of their organization.

With a low minimum wage and high rates of food insecurity, Allegheny County needs more advocates with lived experiences in poverty and hunger. Currently, over 174,000 Allegheny

³ O'Brien, Doug, Erinn Staley, Stephanie Uchima, Eleanor Thompson, and Halley Torres Aldeen. *The Charitable Food Assistance System: The Sector's Role in Ending Hunger in America*. UPS Foundation and the Congressional Hunger Center, 2004.

⁴ Food Research & Action Center. "Our History." FRAC.

⁵ Fisher, Andy. *Big Hunger: The Unholy Alliance Between Corporate America and Anti-Hunger Groups*. MIT Press, 2017.

⁶ Fisher, Andy. *Big Hunger: The Unholy Alliance Between Corporate America and Anti-Hunger Groups*. MIT Press, 2017.

⁷ Goodman, Laurel, Wilson Majee, and Johanna Reed Adams. "Building Community Leaders: Showcasing How Community Leadership Program Mini-grant Funding Propels Graduates to Address Community Needs." *Journal of Community Practice* 26, no. 3 (August 25, 2017): 358-76.

residents, or 14.2% of the county, experience food insecurity with over 40,000 being children.⁸ Nearly one in five residents live in areas considered food deserts.⁹ On a macro level, the Greater Pittsburgh community suffers through \$3.25 billion in economic costs due to these harmful rates of hunger and poverty.¹⁰ Hunger has an adverse effect on nearly everyone. Children experiencing hunger are more like to be suspended from school, repeat a grade, and need special education.¹¹ Food insecure residents develop conditions like heart disease and diabetes as a result of the little availability for healthy, affordable foods. Overall, the economy slows because of increased funding towards healthcare, poor education outcomes, and loss of productivity in the workplace.¹² Anti-hunger organizations in Pittsburgh need to work alongside and build up the capacity of low-income residents to take action on issues and policies that affect them.

In direct contrast to the majority of anti-hunger organizations, Just Harvest has always been on the front lines in terms of engaging community members with lived experience in poverty. Additionally, a significant portion of the staff and board members have lived experience, many coming from working class origins. Since Just Harvest's inception, organizational leadership has made a substantial effort to include those who have actually experienced the issues that Just Harvest fights against. In addition to the powerhouse of knowledge and skill already coming from leadership and staff, the dedication towards including staff and board members with lived experience has helped shape the mission, goals, and programming of Just Harvest. Coupling the technocratic skill of staff and board with the first-hand experience and insights of members with lived experience has resulted in successful grassroots campaigns, a variety of effective anti-poverty programming, and a dedication to tackling obstacles besides food insecurity facing low-income residents.

With its decades of experience interacting with and building up the leadership potential of low-income Allegheny County residents, Just Harvest can continue to expand its grassroots organizing efforts by forming a leadership development program that builds up the capacity of community members to advance social change.

Residents living through poverty would benefit from opportunities to engage in community-focused action. Low-income residents tend to suffer from a lack of engagement in community life, whether it be through low rates of employment, volunteering, or socialization in

⁸ Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. "Hunger Profile: Allegheny County." GPCFB, April, 2016.

⁹ McCart, Melissa. "Food Deserts: Mapping Hunger in Pittsburgh." Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

¹⁰ Inter-Agency Council on Food and Nutrition Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. "A Blueprint for a Hunger-Free Pennsylvania." IACFNCP, August, 2007.

¹¹ No Kid Hungry. "Childhood Hunger in America: Facts on Hunger, Poverty and Federal Nutrition Program Participation." NKH.

¹² Inter-Agency Council on Food and Nutrition Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. "A Blueprint for a Hunger-Free Pennsylvania." IACFNCP, August, 2007.

general.¹³ A leadership development program would elevate the ability of low-income residents to engage and advocate for their communities. This programming would cultivate self-awareness, self-confidence, interpersonal skills, and a greater motivation to improve the Greater Pittsburgh community.¹⁴ Furthermore, people experiencing poverty in Allegheny County would receive the chance to take action on social issues that affect their families.

Low-income residents would greatly enhance anti-poverty organizations across Allegheny County. A qualitative report by nonprofit Why Hunger interviewed community leaders across the country to comment on the importance of collaborating with people with lived experience in poverty.¹⁵ Amy Blumsack, the community organizer at *Neighbors Together*, said, “They are smart, they have direct experience living their lives every day and they have important input for what kind of policy changes need to happen. Our members are a hugely valuable resource and there is such potential to mobilize people who are accessing emergency food programs to make lasting change.” Staff members at organizations like the *Alameda County Community Food Bank* and *Bread for the City* also highlighted the effectiveness of working with people living in poverty. In addition to the report, the successes of Just Harvest demonstrate the importance of involving community members with lived experience in poverty and hunger. Leadership development and advocacy programming have the potential to not only improve the lives of the participating members and the immediate communities impacted but also to provide more substance and insight to influence key decision makers and organize communities.

Just Harvest already works with community members to bolster their advocacy efforts around public policies regarding food security and public transit. The non-profit should take the next step in developing a program designed to cultivate the ability of Greater Pittsburgh area residents to advance social and policy change. Fortunately, low-income residents in Allegheny County are interested in joining the larger struggle against inequality and poverty.

Qualitative research including a focus group, several interviews, and surveys demonstrate that community members want to take action on poverty-related issues. Participants in these conversations consisted of Just Harvest clients who received assistance with their Food Stamp application; no one in the focus groups or interviews previously knew that Just Harvest engages in community organizing and political advocacy. Because none of these clients had prior affiliation with Just Harvest, this small sample highlights the willpower and enthusiasm of low-income residents to take action. Research participants indicated an interest in working with

¹³ Lewis, Kristen, Sarah Burd-Sharps, and Jeffrey Sachs. *The Measure of America, 2010- 2011: Mapping Risks and Resilience*. New York University Press, 2012.

¹⁴ Goodman, Laurel, Wilson Majee, and Johanna Reed Adams. "Building Community Leaders: Showcasing How Community Leadership Program Mini-grant Funding Propels Graduates to Address Community Needs." *Journal of Community Practice* 26, no. 3 (August 25, 2017): 358-76.

¹⁵ Link, Riley. "From Charity to Justice: Defeating Hunger and Poverty." whyHunger, August 9, 2017.

Just Harvest in their advocacy efforts including letter writing, canvassing, and meeting with key decision makers. Additionally, some of Just Harvest’s clients have already taken action in the past through attending rallies, registering voters, and engaging in letter-writing campaigns. Just Harvest can utilize this enthusiasm to develop a leadership development program designed to increase the capacity of Allegheny County residents to advance social change.

This report provides a blueprint for leadership and advocacy development programming centered around people with lived experiences in poverty and hunger. Drawing from the successes and challenges of several leadership development programs, this report showcases the cutting-edge efforts of organizations around the country, from Seattle, Washington to Washington, D.C. This report gathers key knowledge from leadership development and advocacy programs including:

Program	Organization	Location
Speakers Bureau	<i>Food Bank of the Southern Tier</i>	Elmira, NY
Hunger-Free Leadership Institute	<i>Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon</i>	Portland, OR
Community Advocates	<i>D.C. Greens</i>	Washington D.C.
Safety Net Activists	<i>Urban Justice Center</i>	New York, NY
Food Action Board	<i>Hunger Free America</i>	New York, NY
Strategy - Organizing - Leadership Initiative	<i>National Domestic Workers Alliance</i>	Washington D.C.
Untitled (Refer to as SPAN Program)	<i>Statewide Poverty Action Network</i>	Seattle, WA
Asian Pacific Islander Community Leadership Institute	<i>Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization and the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon</i>	Portland, OR

Key findings from these organizations comprise knowledge derived from organizational websites, qualitative reports, and interviews with the staff members who run programming around advocacy and leadership development.

There are some limitations to this report. Research was conducted through conversations with staff members of these programs. Fortunately, the research does include one interview with a participant of both the Asian Pacific Islander Community Leadership Institute and the

Hunger-Free Leadership Institute. Additionally, staff at the *Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon* and *D.C. Greens* have developed mechanisms to gain feedback from program participants. For the former organization, it was to form an advisory board; for the latter, it was to contract Emerson Hunger fellow Funke Aderonmu to develop recommendations to programming with insights from former participants. The *Oregon Food Bank* also contracted Emerson fellow Jamila Cervantes to review community engagement programming around the country; their research helped inform this report.

Experiences & Capacity of Just Harvest

Since its origins in 1987, Just Harvest has organized alongside social workers, anti-hunger organizations, union members, community members with lived experiences in poverty, and college and high school students. Over the thirty two years, the advocacy and service-driven nonprofit has rallied with workers and unemployed individuals to protest proposed welfare funding cuts, rising bus fares, and unlivable wages. Hundreds of community members attended rallies, public hearings, and protests sponsored or encouraged by Just Harvest. The organization has worked with community leaders to mobilize and educate voters. Additionally, leadership development programming emerged. Just Harvest formed civic engagement programs for high school students, low-income families, and female community leaders who experience poverty and hunger. Now, Just Harvest has the tools to measure and evaluate the enthusiasm and willpower of Allegheny County residents towards social change. This section focuses on some of Just Harvest's activism with low-income residents before highlighting the current tools of Just Harvest to mobilize and invite Allegheny residents experiencing poverty to take political action.

From its inception, Just Harvest has effectively cultivated its networks and partnerships to advance social change. From 1996 to the early 2000s, Just Harvest developed and operated a community-based leadership program: the Women's Leadership and Organizing Project (WLOP). The goal of the program was to improve women's self-sufficiency and enable them to become peer leaders in their communities. The program had both a learning and action component. First, the project operated as an 8-week training course. WLOP participants developed skills in speaking to media and policymakers, organizing community members, and breaking down obstacles that disempower low-income women. The program ran for several cycles in numerous low-income neighborhoods across Allegheny County.

The WLOP leaders also took community action. On an advocacy level, several cohorts attended conferences and events in Harrisburg for legislative days as well as participated in rallies and protests around poverty. On a community level, Just Harvest provided \$1000 mini-grants to the cohorts for organizing activities after completing the 8 week training.

Successes of the program can be found in multiple places. Through securing funding from the Michigan-based W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Just Harvest was able to expand the program from one group to several cohorts in both the central Pittsburgh area and the outskirts. WLOP graduates went on to conduct great work. Rochelle Jackson began training and developing her own WLOP cohort; eventually, she became an official staff member as community organizer and then public policy advocate at Just Harvest. Lisa Neal continued to push for more W.I.C. funding, meeting with former Governor Tom Ridge to discuss creating an office in Duquesne.

Finally, Carla Payne-Harrison (along with the Mon View Heights team WATCH) organized a tenants' council and held a successful community conference to promote unity against poverty.

Although WLOP was not sustainable at the time, Just Harvest has continued to organize and work with community members. The non-profit still continues to organize rallies and protests as well as lead community engagement and organizing such as get-out-the-vote activity. Just Harvest is now working on rebuilding its capacity to broadcast its message and work with low-income residents to advance progressive policy.

In the same year of WLOP's creation, Just Harvest formed the Welfare Justice Project to mobilize welfare recipients and allies to advocate for just welfare policy. At the project's peak, Just Harvest was able to develop large-scale rallies and organize large-group participation alongside its coalition partners. Rallies held at the governor's office, legislative offices, and public spaces were joined by hundreds of protesters. Nearly 150 welfare participants and supporters attended a rally in Market Square in 1997. Just Harvest also encouraged community members to challenge decision makers directly by attending and speaking at public hearings. At a federally-mandated Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare (now Department of Human Services) hearing, over 250 community members came to show their distaste for all the welfare funding cuts. Over 40 of them spoke about the effects of the reform on their families or their clients' families.

In addition to working with low-income community members, Just Harvest collaborated with high schools like Avonworth and Oakland Catholic to form the *Real Life Civics Program* for students to gain advocacy skills and work towards improving the Greater Pittsburgh community. These programs usually included volunteering opportunities like promoting progressive policy through teach-in's and joining Just Harvest at rallies and meetings with public officials around the state.

The results of a focus group, several interviews, and surveys demonstrate that low-income Allegheny County residents want to advance social change around the issues of food insecurity and poverty. Just Harvest can expand on this enthusiasm and their own decades of experience to develop a leadership development program designed to increase the capacity of Greater Pittsburgh residents to take action and organize their communities.

In the fall of 2018, Just Harvest developed a new method for inviting people with lived experience in poverty and food insecurity to join the organization's advocacy efforts. As part of its direct service programming, Food Stamp specialists assist over 1200 Allegheny County residents annually with completing their SNAP applications each year. Just Harvest interns and volunteers are tasked with conducting follow-up calls to measure the progress of clients with

their applications. Now, interns use these “follow-up” calls to talk to applicants about Just Harvest’s policy work and invite them to participate. New scripts for these calls were developed using insights from Just Harvest Food Stamp specialists, experts at peer organizations, and academics trained in behavioral science. Over the course of December and January, interns have signed up over 30 applicants to work with Just Harvest. Community Organizer Helen Gerhardt then reaches out to these invested clients with specific invitations to join in Just Harvest’s advocacy efforts.

In terms of leadership development programming, Just Harvest can call on its existing members as well as new potential interested clients to bolster advocacy work around hunger and poverty. Just Harvest must draw key insights from its past community work to ensure the most efficient and effective leadership development and advocacy work in the contemporary political landscape.

Leadership Development Models

[Speakers Bureau at the Food Bank of the Southern Tier \(NY\)](#)¹⁶

Formed in the spring of 2016, the Speakers Bureau has, so far, graduated two cohorts. The program develops the leadership and public speaking skills of Upstate New York residents living in poverty. By the end of the ten-session training, graduates are equipped to share their personal narrative and explain the complexity of food insecurity and food access programs in the United States. The Food Bank of the Southern Tier works with outside organizations to ensure that Speakers will receive the chance to speak about their lived experience and share their insights. Training can range from subjects like self-care to media literacy activism. Speakers also received the opportunity to engage in Toastmasters. Toastmasters is a public speaking program designed to train people to give formal speeches as well as impromptu public talks. Speakers received \$10 gift cards per session and a \$100 gift card at the end. There were 12 active members per cohort.

In 2018, rather than form a new cohort, the Food Bank of the Southern Tier partnered the cohorts with each other to explore commonalities and shared interests. The first group consisted of primarily rural white women, and the second group comprised mostly women of color.

[Hunger-Free Leadership Institute at the Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon \(OR\)](#)¹⁷

Started in 2016, the Hunger-Free Leadership Institute has provided staff guidance, financial resources, and training to two institute cohorts. The program consists of three parts: (1) community organizing, (2) personal and group reflection, and (3) completion of an applied team project related to research, advocacy, or organizing. Through the program, participants (called “fellows”) become pro-active agents in hunger justice, advocacy efforts, and community engagement. Each participant receives a stipend up to \$1000. Training breaks into four segments:

- First training: develop project ideas and learn the basics of community engagement, outreach, advocacy
- Second training: help facilitate workshop around racial equity led by a hired consultant
- Third training: participate in hunger-free Oregon lobbying day of action and learn about political engagement before being asked to meet with state legislators
- Last training: share outcomes of applied team projects

¹⁶ Food Bank of the Southern Tier. “Speakers Bureau.” FBST.; Community of Practice. 2018.

¹⁷ Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon. “Hunger-Free Leadership Institute.” PHFO.; Killeen, Alison and Chris Baker. “Leadership Development.” Telephone interview by author. 2018.; Leung, Jackie. “Leadership Development.” Telephone interview by author. 2019.

The institute runs for eight months of the year. Every other month, the fellows meet with staff for two days of eight-hour training. During the off-months, fellows informally gather or meet with staff to discuss their applied team project. As projects ramp up, so too does the time commitment of the fellows. In 2017, during the second half of the program, fellows met weekly or biweekly to work on their projects. Fellows spent an average of two-to-five hours per week spent on institute-related activities.

[Community Advocates at D.C. Greens \(Washington D.C.\)](#)¹⁸

The Community Advocates program provides training, connections, and compensation to residents with lived experience of food insecurity as they develop as advocates for a just food system in D.C. The primary goal of the program is to build the power of communities most impacted by food injustice to affect food policy at the city level. Six to eight people participate in the program each year. They are paid as part-time employees. Training focuses on:

- D.C. Budget & Policy → Advocates learn about the annual budget calendar, city council and committee structure, D.C. Greens' advocacy history, and short-term advocacy goals. In this training, they learn to craft their own testimony and budget demands.
- Food Justice → Advocates learn about the industrialized food system, sustainability, the grocery gap, food deserts, and food apartheid.
- Spokesperson & Public Speaking → Advocates build skills for speaking with audiences who are less knowledgeable about food justice.
- Community Organizing → Advocates learn power analysis and acquire tools for conducting community outreach.

Outside of training, advocates are expected to (1) testify at city budget hearings, (2) participate in local public hearings and meetings, (3) conduct outreach support for community events and training and (4) build relationships with strategic actors in the food policy system.

[Safety Net Activists at the Urban Justice Center \(NY\)](#)¹⁹

The Safety Net Activist program emerged from the Urban Justice Center's desire to collaborate with community members to tackle systemic issues. In 2014, the center conducted research through large group sessions and through over 100 surveys from people who have interacted with the NY public assistance system. From this qualitative research, the Urban Justice Center

¹⁸ D.C. Greens. "Community Advocates Program Overview." D.C. Greens.; Carter, Asha. "Leadership Development." Telephone interview by author. 2018.

¹⁹ Urban Justice Center. "Community Organizing." UJC.; Strom, Helen. "Leadership Development." Telephone interview by author. 2019.

wrote up a report, the “Culture of Deterrence”, to highlight both structural and personnel problems and to pose recommendations to the city.

Besides staff, the people interviewed and surveyed by the center became interested in the conclusions of the report. Survey and focus group-participants worked with staff to form the Safety Net Activists to advocate for the center’s recommendations. Working with the Urban Justice Center, the Activists engage in grassroots organizing, policy advocacy, media campaigns, coalition building, and public education to empower New Yorkers and make them aware of their rights. Since 2015, the Activists have met bimonthly to plan out political action at the local and state level. In addition to original research participants, the Urban Justice Center recruits members through their legal services programming.

Food Action Board at *Hunger-Free America (NY)*²⁰

Originating from Hunger Free America (formerly known as the New York City Coalition Against Hunger), the Food Action Board comprises a large cohort of community members dedicated to cultivating leadership and community organizing skills. Meetings are held once or twice a month, each around two hours long. They are based in both the Bronx and Brooklyn. About 15 to 20 people participate in each meeting. Meetings provide training around:

- Society & Government
- Meeting with Key Decision Makers
- Phone Banking & Canvassing
- Messaging & Media
- Community Outreach & Organizing

Besides training, Food Action Board members meet with legislators, talk to the press, and attend conferences.

Strategy - Organizing - Leadership Initiative at the *National Domestic Workers Alliance (Washington D.C.)*²¹

In 2011, the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA) partnered with Social Justice Leadership and the environmental justice nonprofit Generative Somatics to launch a two-year

²⁰ Hunger Free America. “Food Action Board Project.” HFA.; Acevedo, Filomena. “Leadership Development.” Telephone interview by author. 2019.

²¹ Ito, Jennifer, Rachel Rosner, Vanessa Carter, and Manuel Pastor. “Transforming Lives, Transforming Movement Building: Lessons from the National Domestic Workers Alliance Strategy - Organizing - Leadership (SOL) Initiative.” USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity, November, 2014.

leadership and organizing training program: the Strategy - Organizing - Leadership Initiative. Training is a series of five, four-day, intensive retreats. The Alliance invites both domestic worker-leaders and community organizers from both established and emerging organizations across the country. The over 75 domestic worker leaders and staff representing 25 NDWA affiliates have participated in the training initiative.

The primary goal of the initiative is to provide members with new leadership skills and organizing ability to push forward the vision and increase the power of domestic workers. The initiative also aims to transform the overall community of domestic workers by building relationships and enhancing national strategy.

Despite being a national leadership development program, the initiative has effective aspects of its programming that other anti-poverty organizations has not developed.

[SPAN Programming at the Statewide Poverty Action Network \(WA\)](#)²²

In the spring of 2018, Statewide Poverty Action Network, or Poverty Action for short, led a series of training for interested volunteers and community members. Staff specifically focused on recruiting people with lived experiences in hunger and poverty. They recruited participants through word-of-mouth and through community partnerships. The program lasted for six weeks (one training per week) and included eight people. Perks included a financial reward of \$500.

[Asian Pacific Islander Community Leadership Institute at the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization and the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon \(OR\)](#)²³

The Asian Pacific Islander Community Leadership Institute is a leadership development program that runs from September to April every year, training and developing Asian Pacific Americans as leaders within their community. There are 8 sessions during the course of the program. Training and workshops revolve around mitigating conflict, facilitating large groups, and public speaking. In addition to the training days, each program participant has to complete one group project and one individual project. These projects concern work areas like public health, community organizing, and social research. Additionally, each group has to lead a workshop during one of the training sessions.

²² Statewide Poverty Action Network. "History." SPAN.; Vega, Omar Cuevas. "Leadership Development." Telephone interview by author. 2019.

²³ Coalition of Communities of Color. "Asian Pacific Islander Community Leadership Institute." CCC.; Leung, Jackie. "Leadership Development." Telephone interview by author. 2019.

Participants also receive mentorship. Each participant is paired with a leader in the Asian Pacific American community. Mentors include community members from public health professionals to program directors. Some mentors had completed the program previously.

The Asian Pacific Islander Community Leadership Institute does not have an explicit focus on developing low-income members. However, the program centers around another source of marginalization: racism towards Asian Pacific Americans.

Best Practices

Food, Transit, and Childcare

Almost every program provided free meals, ensured child-care, and provided transportation stipends in the form of gas mileage reimbursement or public transit cards. Some programs only provided transportation stipends to those who traveled long distances. By providing these resources, organizations lessened obstacles to participation that low-income residents face.

Safe Emotional Space

Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon's Hunger-Free Learning Institute practiced trauma-informed care to ensure that every fellow was comfortable in sharing their story around hunger and poverty. Staff acknowledged the emotional and physical stresses that the fellows faced; additionally, they recognized the historical trauma that marginalized groups have endured. Program participants learned how to tailor their own experience to a variety of audiences without harming themselves.

The Food Bank of the Southern Tier's Speakers Bureau practiced active listening. At the beginning of each session, members speak with each other about their work and personal lives. Additionally, the Speakers are provided a ten-minute space at the beginning of each session for people to talk about their trauma.²⁴

In the leadership development initiative by the National Domestic Workers Alliance, they practiced self- and group-care. One strategy involved beginning each day with having program participants in a circle and emotionally center themselves. Participants had a moment to relax and then interact with others before training. Another strategy, paired healing practices, gave trainees a chance to emotionally care for others and be emotionally cared for.

Because poverty and hunger can result in trauma, leadership development programming needs to take in consideration the emotional hardship that low income residents undergo. In order to develop someone's capacity to community organize and take action, Just Harvest must ensure that future program participants have the tools to practice self-care and the space to connect with others facing similar deprivation.

²⁴ Cervantes, Jamila. "Client Engagement: 2018 Report." Oregon Food Bank and the Congressional Hunger Center, February, 2018.

Mentorship

In the Oregon-based Asian Pacific Islander Community Leadership Institute, members receive mentorship. Each participant is paired with a leader in the Asian Pacific American community. Mentors include community members from public health professionals to program directors. Some mentors have completed the program previously. Mentors can provide guidance to program participants as they look for opportunities during and after the program. Additionally, mentors showcase the transition from theory to action; they actively use the skills that program participants are taught through leadership development trainings.

It must be noted that the institute found mentors based on ethnic and racial identity, not the socioeconomic status of the participant. Fortunately, in building mentorship opportunities, Just Harvest has staff and board members with lived experience in poverty. Additionally, if leadership development programming continued past one cycle, then program participants could become mentors in the long-run.

Prior Insight Gathering & Role of Clients in Planning Advocacy Efforts

Statewide Poverty Action Network (WA)

Listening sessions take place across the state in the fall before the Washington state legislative session begins. The five-to-six locations for sessions include sites in communities with strong partnerships and previous involvement, communities with high rates of unemployment and high usage of public benefits, and communities with high levels of racial diversity. In one of the listening sessions, the program focused on immigrant farm workers in Washington. Listening sessions typically involve eight to twelve people; some sessions have had up to twenty participants. Poverty Action staff ask questions about the issues facing community members, what's needed in terms of basic needs, and what solutions they may have. From these discussions, the policy agenda of Poverty Action is formed. Session participants receive free childcare, a meal, and a \$35 cash stipend or gift card to a local supermarket.

Additionally, listening sessions are also useful for recruiting Washingtonians to affect political change. Political action includes writing op-eds, attending local/state hearings, and participating in state lobbying. These sessions also translate into recruitment opportunities for Poverty Action's leadership development programming.

Safety Net Activists (NY)

The Urban Justice Center conducted qualitative research through large-scale focus groups and through 100 surveys from people who have received public assistance from NYC. Consequently, the Urban Justice Center wrote up a report, the “Culture of Deterrence”, to expose bureaucratic problems within public assistance systems and to pose recommendations to the city. Survey and focus group participants worked with staff to form the Safety Net Activists.

The two organizations were able to expand their advocacy efforts through conducting research. As a way to recruit more members for its grassroots organizing, Just Harvest could conduct a research study involving its own food stamp clients or tax season clients.

Tracking Skills

Programs like the D.C. Greens’ Community Advocates program developed pre- and post-skills tests. D.C. Greens contracted an Emerson Fellow to conduct surveys as well as five qualitative interviews with former Community Advocates.²⁵ Surveys were taken by Advocates to measure progress with skills like public speaking and advocacy ability. The surveys indicated positive growth on both technocratic skill as well as improved knowledge of D.C. food policy systems.

Advisory Board

To prepare for its second cohort of fellows, the Hunger-Free Leadership Institute developed an advisory board consisting of staff members and previous fellows. The advisory board assisted in guiding the recruitment and training of the second cohort. Originally, the institute was developed for a more diverse socioeconomic group including organization volunteers and Oregonians who have used its services. The advisory board pushed for the program to recruit more participants with lived experiences in hunger and poverty for its second cohort.

Tacking Political Action

Each of the leadership development programs includes more than just trainings, these programs include real-life opportunities for members to take social and policy action.

²⁵ Aderonmu, Funke. “Community Advocates: An Approach to Constituent Engagement in Local Food Policy and Activism in the District of Columbia.” D.C. Greens and the Congressional Hunger, February, 2018.

Speakers Bureau (NY)

Throughout the program, Speakers have worked with the community to share their personal stories around hunger and poverty. They have aided researchers at local colleges, served on community boards and committees, and educated both public and private groups on food insecurity and poverty. They have also traveled to both Albany and Washington D.C. to educate legislators using the real stories and narratives of those who experience poverty and hunger.

In 2015, two graduates were invited to speak and attend an anti-hunger conference by Feeding America. There, Speakers spoke on a panel about their lived experience with hunger and poverty. Since then, members have been invited to future iterations of the conference as well as other conferences oriented towards ending hunger and poverty.

Hunger-Free Leadership Institute (OR)

The institute had fellows complete an applied team project, or capstone project, related to research, advocacy, and organizing. These projects enhance the skills and capacity of fellows to become pro-active agents in hunger justice, advocacy efforts, and community engagement.

In the second cohort, there were three group projects. Two fellows researched the practice of running for office by interviewing local elected officials. Four fellows developed a SNAP Advisory Board for Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon; these board meetings continue to this day. The Oregon Department of Human Services even reached out to them to develop a proposal around the Family Services Review Commission. Finally, the last four fellows developed a research-focused child hunger prevention team which led a hunger-free schools campaign in Oregon; they conducted listening circles and surveys involving over 130 participants. One of the fellows was hired on an intern to assist staff to conduct more qualitative research.

Community Advocates (D.C.)

Community Advocates have to take a variety of actions as part of their part-time job. They must (1) give testimony at city budget hearings and other legislative hearings, (2) provide feedback in public meetings that impact policy in D.C., and (3) become active participants in the DC Food Policy Council and contribute to national policy conversations, especially as experts with lived experience using the SNAP program. Advocates have had two notable successes among others:

- **Testifying at city budget hearings**→ Advocates were able to secure \$1.2 million for Produce Plus (food access program at D.C. Greens) in the FY18 city budget!
- **Participating in public meetings**→ In 2017, CA trainees participated in meetings held by the DC Food Policy Council, Ward 7 Health Alliance, a number of other bodies, evaluating, and giving feedback.

Safety Net Activists (NY)

Safety Net Activists conduct grassroots organizing, policy advocacy, media campaigns, coalition building, and public education. Specifically, they have:

- Quarterly meetings with the city's human services departments to pose recommendations and address issues (they have developed a positive relationship thanks to De Blasio)
- State legislative campaigns including pushing for increased funding for housing vouchers
- Federal legislative campaigns including visiting legislative offices in D.C. and conducting advocacy calls around the Farm Bill

In 2015, Safety Net Activists scheduled four meetings with top officials at the agency Human Resources Administration (HRA) which runs the city's SNAP programming, including one with then-HRA Commissioner Steven Banks. These meetings have led to in-house changes like:

- The purchasing of nameplates for HRA staff at all Centers to increase accountability
- Training for staff on emergency grants
- Training for staff on interview skills
- The development of new policy around security at Centers

Additionally, in 2016, the Safety Net Activists worked with Steven Banks on his 90-day review of homelessness policies. The views and concerns of the Activists were heard and many suggestions were included in the planned reform of the city's Department of Homeless Services. To advocate for even more progressive policy change, the Safety Net Activists testified at the City Council's hearing regarding the proposed policy changes by the city.

Food Action Board (NY)

First, there is an annual November press event where members from different New York City boroughs come to speak on their experiences with poverty and hunger. Second, members are invited to speak about their experiences with poverty at conferences like the F.R.A.C. conference. Finally, Board members testify to legislators and key decision makers about their

experiences with food insecurity and poverty. For example, one member testified for the 2015 National Commission on Hunger at the Albany public hearing.

SPAN Programming (WA)

Participants go to public city council meetings and other events sponsored by local government. They also take action during annual legislative lobby days oriented around poverty and hunger.

Asian Pacific Islander Community Leadership Institute (OR)

Institute participants have to complete one solo project and one group project. Group projects revolve around public health, community organizing, and social research.

Stipends & Rewards

Program	Organization	Stipend
Speakers Bureau	Food Bank of the Southern Tier	\$10 gift card per session; \$100 gift card at end
Hunger-Free Leadership Institute	Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon	\$1000 sliding scale; gift cards or check, different time for each fellow
Community Advocates	D.C. Greens	Part-time employees; paid \$20 per hour
SPAN Programming	Statewide Poverty Action Network	\$500 reward at end

Unlike the other programs, these four programs provide either a wage or reward for completing the program. Community Advocates paid their employees \$20 per hour. These employees work throughout the six months of programming, sharing their story to key decision makers and organizing for their communities. D.C. Greens ensured that low-income residents are paid properly for engaging in long-term political advocacy and grassroots organizing.

The Hunger-Free Leadership Institute and SPAN programming provided significant financial incentives for program participation. The former addressed the cliff effect. The cliff effect is when a person’s financial situation improves through earning more money, but the short-term improvement results in a loss of public benefits worth more than the raise or temporary stipend. The organizations used both gift card and checks; the timeframe could be a weekly or lump sum; and the amounts could change over time depending on the circumstances of the fellow.

Finally, the Speakers Bureau at the Food Bank of the Southern Tier gave \$10 gift cards per session and one \$100 gift card at the end of the program.

These leadership development programs across the country showcase the different ways in which anti-poverty organizations can draw from the community of those with lived experience in poverty. In the creation of its own leadership development program, Just Harvest can refer to its own experience and the experiences and promising aspects of anti-hunger organizations across the country. The next section analyzes the challenges faced by the staff and program participants in these community organizing programs.

Overcoming Obstacles

In general, many barriers exist to prevent low-income residents from becoming more involved. They may not see others who look like them. The meeting expectations may be foreign to them, or the language used too technical. A lack of childcare or translation may obstruct interested individuals. There are always transportation issues, family problems, emergencies, and unpredictable work schedules. Therefore, organizations providing leadership development programming need to be responsive to these issues.

Funding is difficult to acquire for staffing and providing resources for leadership development programming. Some programs have either been shut down or temporarily stopped due to a lack of funds. To ensure effective leadership development programming, organizations need a strong financial foundation.

Few of these organizations engage in any sort of tracking graduates after graduation. They measure the acquisition of skills, but not the political or social action of members after the program has ended. Some organizations keep in touch with their graduates, but they have no formal rubric to address the successes and failures of graduates. In creating its own programming, Just Harvest should develop evaluation measures to track skills gained as well as what program participants work on after graduating from leadership development programming.

Some members of leadership development programs have argued that exploitation can exist in programming around those with lived experience in poverty. For example, stories of program participants are used to get funds for other services, yet these participants are never asked to inform the policy planning or choice of the organization. To address this issues, one organization has been working with other area organizations to form a collaborative to apply for joint funding and to have more resources, connections, and leadership opportunities for program participants. Collaboratives will also disseminate power and control over the programming to multiple organizations, thus avoiding one organization monopolizing power over the program.

Just Harvest has always worked in partnership with and been informed by Allegheny County residents with lived experience in poverty. Just Harvest can benefit from working with other grassroots organizations in the Greater Pittsburgh area. Collaboration can help in the pursuit of raising funds, developing trainings, and promoting progressive public policy.

By drawing from the successes and challenges faced by leadership development programs around the county, Just Harvest can adequately prepare itself for investing in a program focused on cultivating the community organizing and advocacy skills of Allegheny County residents. The next section poses recommendations based on insights from these programs.

Recommendations

First Recommendation: Develop a leadership development program.

Program participants will be supported by the Client & Community Engagement Specialist as well as community organizer Helen Gerhardt. The program will run for six months from the spring to the fall. The cohort will work towards improving anti-poverty policy at the local, state, and national level through canvassing, interacting with media, and influencing key decision-makers. The program will be open to people of all ages and should represent the cultural and regional diversity of Allegheny County. Key responsibilities include:

- Attend Just Harvest trainings on advocacy, community organizing, storytelling, local politics, social justice, oppression, and trauma-informed care
- Attend and present at local hearings such as city council & Port Authority meetings
- Participate in and take on leadership roles for legislative lobby days at the Pennsylvania State Capitol
- Galvanize other low-income residents to take political action and affect social change
- Build knowledge of public policy and systemic inequities

Program participants should have the willingness and enthusiasm to advance progressive policy in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, and the United States. They should also have an interest in building their leadership skills including public speaking and community organizing. Finally, program participants should have experience living in poverty or food insecurity.

Leadership development programming should also be in partnership with Allegheny County grassroots organizations. Just Harvest should invite speakers and create trainings in collaboration with organizations like [One Pittsburgh](#), [Pittsburgh United](#), and the [Black Urban Gardeners and Farmers Cooperative of Pittsburgh](#).

Finally, Just Harvest should work with mental health experts in Allegheny County. Low-income residents have most likely experienced trauma as a result of poverty and/or hunger. Just Harvest should identify and refer to mental health experts to create emotionally safe spaces for program participants as well as to develop trainings where program participants learn how to effectively organize and advocate while using trauma-informed approaches.

Examples of syllabi and program materials are in Appendix (Item 1).

Second Recommendation: Raise funds to hire a full-time Client & Community Engagement Specialist.

Just Harvest should raise funds to develop a new position to increase the level of community engagement and community-driven political advocacy. Specifically, the Client & Community Engagement Specialist would connect food stamp clients and other community members with lived experience in poverty to Just Harvest's advocacy efforts, develop and manage leadership development programming, and help raise money to bolster programmatic measures around advocacy. Fundraising for advocacy and leadership development will be a difficult task. It is recommended that a new staff member assist Just Harvest leadership in securing funds to expand the organization's capacity to organize low-income residents.

The Specialist would collaborate with key partners such as food pantries, grassroots nonprofits, and other advocacy organizations to develop advocacy efforts and enhance program recruitment. Additionally, the Specialist would report and receive mentorship from Just Harvest lead community organizer Helen Gerhardt.

The Specialist would serve as coordinator for leadership development program participants. They would develop evaluation measures including skills acquired, action taken during program, and action taken after graduation. The Specialist would also collaborate with Just Harvest's Food Stamp Assistance team so as to gain a better understanding of the situation of Just Harvest clients. In addition to sitting in on and contributing to team meetings, the Specialist should also conduct the "follow-up" assistance calls. Since the Community Engagement Specialist will be working with people experiencing poverty and using public assistance, working with the Food Stamp Assistance team will keep the Specialist connected to the issues Just Harvest clients are currently facing. Additionally, through working with both the community organizing arm and Food Stamp team, the Specialist would serve as a bridge between the two departments.

The ideal candidate would be someone who has lived in Allegheny County and preferably with lived experience in poverty and food insecurity. The Specialist should have multiple years of community organizing and mobilizing experience. Additionally, they should have a base level of grant writing and fundraising experience. If not, the Specialist can work with Just Harvest leadership to develop their grassroots fundraising skill and technique. An ideal candidate must also demonstrate experience working with people from diverse socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds. The candidate should have experience showing commitment to historically oppressed communities such as people of color, immigrants, refugees, and/or LGBTQ people. Additionally, they need excellent facilitation and relationship-building skills.

An official job description is included in Appendix (Item 2).

Third Recommendation: Raise funds for future transportation, child-care, and food costs for programming.

For program participants, there should be allocated funds for transportation stipends, child-care, and food costs. The trinity ensures greater participation from low-income participants by addressing known barriers to inclusion.

Fourth Recommendation: Raise funds for program stipends and rewards for leadership development graduation.

Some of the programs researched have used stipends to boost recruitment as well as ensure a higher retention rate. Programs like the Speakers Bureau, the Hunger-Free Leadership Institute, and Community Advocates maintained low drop-out rates in part because of the funds and rewards made available to program participants. However, each program had a different compensation style (salary vs stipend) and a different amount (\$1000 stipend vs \$10 per session). Additionally, the financial reward is only one part of why individuals choose to participate. Other reasons include capacity and skill building as well as connecting with others with shared experience. It is important before starting a leadership development program to explore participant compensation in more detail. Different communities require different approaches; residents in Allegheny County are in a different situation than residents in NYC or Seattle, WA.

It should also be noted that Just Harvest should value the time, efforts, and knowledge of program participants. They would contribute to Just Harvest's community organizing and advocacy efforts; it is important to compensate low-income residents for their labor.

Fifth Recommendation: Work towards the development of a board of low-income residents to assist programming.

After completing the first cohort, Just Harvest should develop an advisory board for future programming around leadership development and advocacy in general. The board, composed of individuals from previous future cohorts, would help organize and plan for each new round of leadership development programming

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Appendix (Item 1)

Potential Course Topics

- Allegheny County → Advocates learn about the County government structure, important government agencies like the Port Authority, and Just Harvest’s advocacy goals. In this training, they learn to craft their own testimony and budget demands.
- Poverty, Hunger, and Oppression → Advocates gain an enhanced understanding of identity-driven oppression and marginalization as well the ways the government and the private sector have contributed to the maltreatment of certain groups.
- Public Speaking → Advocates build skills for speaking in front of large audiences.
- Community Organizing → Advocates learn power analysis and acquire tools for conducting community outreach.
- Lobbying Policymakers → Advocates develop the skill to effectively influence key decision makers.

Community Advocates Training

Food Justice and the Food System 101	4 session (8 hours)	Developed and facilitated by D.C. Greens
The Local Legislative and Budget Process	3 sessions (6 hours)	Developed and facilitated by D.C. Greens with support from Fair Budget Coalition
Being an Effective Spokesperson	2 sessions (4 hours)	Developed with support from Burness
Anti-Racism	2 sessions (4 hours)	Developed in partnership with Nicole Newman, an anti-racism trainer from D.C.
Community Organizing and Advocacy Strategies	3 sessions (6 hours)	Developed with support from Movement Matters

Hunger-Free Leadership Institute Training

The Institute was divided into group training every other month and webinars/small group meetings around applied group project on the other months. The table below shows the trainings.

First Training	Introductions; Social Change training (service, self-care, education, advocacy, direct action); Understanding power; 1:1 Relational meetings
Second Training	Hunger and Capitalism; Cultural identity of food; Timeline of Social and Food Justice in Oregon; Social aspects of food; Race, Class, and Hunger; Idea Sharing on Capstone (applied group) projects
Third Training	Bill → Law, Meeting with Legislators, Advocacy 101, Capstone planning activity
Last Training	Presentations from program participants, celebration

Resources for Working with People who Have Experienced Trauma

[Trauma Informed: The Trauma Toolkit](#): The toolkit outlines different practices that can assist service providers and anti-poverty organizations in increasing their capacity to deliver trauma-informed services.

[The Trauma Informed Care Project](#): The Iowa-based project has a variety of resources concerning trauma-informed care and trauma-informed approaches.

[Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#): The administration explicitly states the key principles of trauma-informed care and trauma-informed approaches. The organization also offers training and technical assistance.



Appendix (Item 2)

Organizational Mission

Just Harvest educates, empowers and mobilizes people to eliminate hunger, poverty, and economic injustice in our communities by influencing public policy, engaging in advocacy, and connecting people to public benefits.

Vision Statement

Just Harvest dramatically reduces hunger in local communities by empowering people in need to obtain the public benefits that are their right. By educating people about how to hold those in public policy arena accountable for eliminating poverty and hunger, Just Harvest serves as a valuable community resource. As the region's recognized authority on hunger and poverty issues, Just Harvest shapes public opinion on the appropriate role of government in eradicating hunger and poverty. We are the undisputed leaders in this field.

Job Title: Community & Client Engagement Specialist

Job Status: Non-exempt, Full-Time

Reports to: Grassroots Organizer

Positions Supervised: Interns and volunteers

Position Summary:

Enhance Just Harvest's effectiveness by identifying, developing, recruiting, and mobilizing a diverse group of members and coalition partners to advance issues that reflect Just Harvest's mission of eliminating hunger and poverty.

Essential Functions

- Demonstrate and reflect the mission and values of Just Harvest.
- Acquires knowledge of the public policies that impact JH mission.
- Develop leadership development programming for low-income Allegheny residents.
- Direct day-to-day operations, develop tracking methods, and serve as primary contact for leadership development programming.
- Organize grassroots lobbying trips, rallies, protests, and events in partnership with JH staff.
- Develop innovative ways to engage low-income residents in Just Harvest's grassroots organizing.
- Assist with grassroots fundraising and integrate fundraising into Just Harvest's organizing agenda and activities.
- Conduct follow-up calls for Food Stamp Assistance Program.

- Develop relationships with current and new coalition partners to leverage Just Harvest’s strength and effectiveness in advocacy.
- Represent Just Harvest to the media and public as needed.
- Participate in Just Harvest staff meetings.
- Complete other duties as assigned.

Knowledge, Skills & Abilities Required for the Position

- Ability to:
 - Maintain confidentiality.
 - Work as part of a team.
 - Listen to others.
 - Work with and not for the members.
 - Work with people from diverse backgrounds.
 - Multi-task.
 - Work efficiently with limited resources.
 - Work as part of a team.
- Excellent interpersonal communications skills.
- Excellent public speaking skills.
- Excellent written communications.
- Computer literacy, including competency with MS Office.

Working Conditions

- Flexible work schedule including occasional evening or weekend work.
- Small office setting with limited resources.
- Occasional work outdoors.
- Job at times is fast-paced and at other times sedentary requiring 20 pounds of exerted force.
- Computer usage that requires repetitive motions.
- Travel expected to local meetings, with occasional travel to regional, state, and national meetings.
- Lifting up to 20 pounds.

Qualifications

- Lived experience with hunger and poverty strongly preferred
- Expertise in issues relevant to the Just Harvest mission
- Commitment to serving historically oppressed communities
- Minimum two (2) years relevant experience in public policy, grassroots or community organizing, social work, or a related field preferred
- Interest in grant-writing and fundraising
- Bachelor’s degree preferred

Other Requirements of the Position: None

**Just Harvest is an Equal Opportunity/ Affirmative Action Employer
Just Harvest is a Drug-Free Workplace**

Appendix (Item 3)

Every program had training and community organizing action along with most programs having transportation, food, and child-care made available.

Program	Organization	Location	Timeline	Stipend	Promising Aspects
Speakers Bureau	Food Bank of the Southern Tier	Elmira, NY	10 weeks; 10 sessions; 3-hour trainings	\$10 gift card per session; \$100 gift card at end	Ten-minute active listening sessions; sharing personal stories across the state and in D.C.
Hunger-Free Leadership Institute	Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon	Portland, OR	8 months; 4 sessions; 2 days of 8-hour sessions; other time for group	\$1000 sliding scale; gift cards or check; different time for each fellow	Trauma-informed care; Formation of Advisory Board; Applied Team Project or capstone
Community Advocates	D.C. Greens	Washington D.C.	5 months; twice a week for first half; once a week for second half	Part-time employees; paid \$20 per hour	Active Participants in D.C. Food Policy Council
Safety Net Activists	Urban Justice Center	New York, NY	First and Third Wednesday of each month; 2-hour training		Qualitative research as means of recruitment; regular meetings with city officials
Food Action Board	Hunger Free America	New York, NY	Twice a month; 2-hour training		November press event
Strategy - Organizing - Leadership Initiative	National Domestic Workers Alliance	New York, NY	2 years; 4 sessions; five, four-day retreats		Paired healing practices
SPAN Programming	Stawieide Poverty Action Network	Seattle, WA	6 weeks; 6 sessions	\$500 reward at end	Cross-state listening sessions
Asian Pacific Islander Community Leadership Institute	Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization; Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon	Portland, OR	8 months; 8 sessions; 1 overnight retreat; 6 sessions 8 hour-long		Mentorship programming; one solo project and one group project