

Utilizing Digital Advocacy as a Tool for Transformational Change



David Street



HUNGRY FOR ACTION
OKLAHOMA'S ANTI-HUNGER
CONFERENCE

#HungryForActionOK





USING DIGITAL ADVOCACY AS A TOOL FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

- **The Power of Digital and Social Media in Justice Work**
- *Presenter: Director of Community Engagement David Street*

ABOUT ME



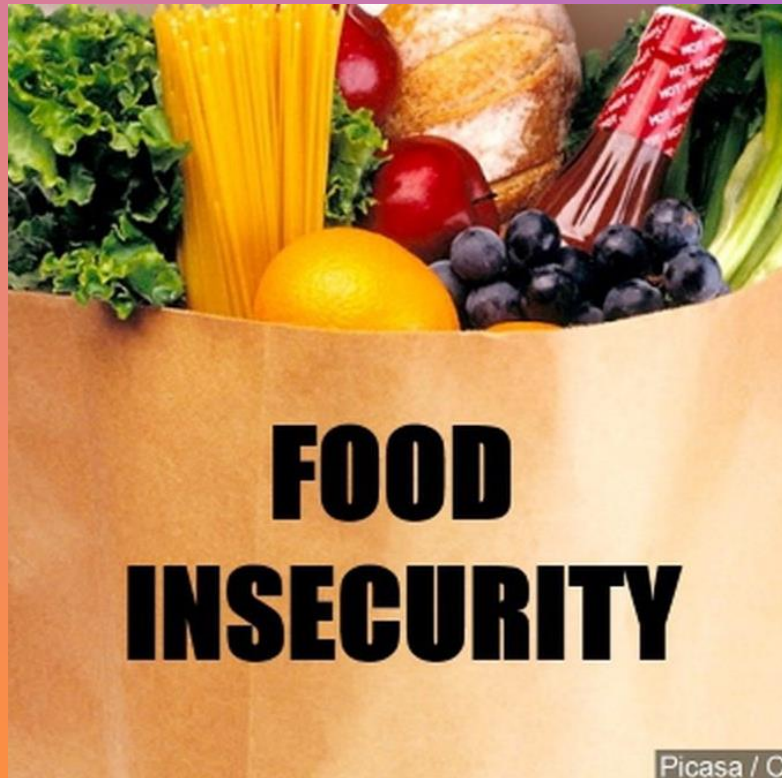
- + • 1) Nearly 10 years work in the food justice advocacy space.
- 2) Aspen Institute Food & Society Fellow.
- 3) United WAY NCA “Thrive 365” grant recipient.
- 4) Native of Washington, D.C.

FEEDING AMERICA OVERVIEW



- + **Feeding America is the largest domestic hunger-relief organization in the U.S., comprising a network of 200+ food banks**
- **Our Mission is to feed America's hungry through a nationwide network of member food banks and engage the country in the fight to end hunger.**
- **Current Reach: Serves 40 million people annually, providing over 4 billion meals each year.**

CURRENT STATISTICS ON FOOD INSECURITY.



1) Food Insecurity Rate: As of 2022, 10.5% of households in the U.S. are food insecure.

2) Children Affected: 1 in 6 children faces hunger, translating to 17 million children.

3) Impact of COVID-19: Food insecurity increased by 50% during the pandemic, highlighting the need for food assistance

4) According to a 2023 KOSU article, 14.3% of Oklahoma households, or almost 250,000 households, experienced food insecurity between 2020 and 2022. This is an increase from previous years, with the average percentage of food insecure households between 2017 and 2019 being 14.7%. Oklahoma is one of the top six states for food insecurity.

BEST PRACTICES FOR ONLINE COMMUNITY BUILDING STRATEGIES:

1

Engage authentically with your audience. Let's talk about LinkedIn.

2

- Use storytelling to connect emotionally.

3

- Create inclusive and diverse spaces online.

4

- Regularly update and respond to community feedback.


NATIONAL WORK & LOCAL WORK

Faith groups represent over 40% of our network's overall distribution.

Black farmers and organizations like MANRRS help us learn and connect with Next Gen AG leaders.

Food banks are a trusted voice and resource and often times are able to fund or incubate various opportunities.

NATIONALLY, OUR COMMUNITY ACCELERATOR AND OUR FOOD EQUITY IMPACT FUND, TRAINS AND RESOURCES HUNDREDS OF ORGANIZATIONS DOING MEANINGFUL FOOD WORK.



WE CONNECT WITH NATIONAL GROUPS AND COALITIONS, TO FIGURE OUT SPACES, CAMPAIGNS AND IDEAS THAT GROW THE ROOM FROM A MOBILIZATION AND ADVOCACY LENS.

LEVERAGING LINKEDIN FOR ADVOCACY AND ONLINE COMMUNITY BUILDING

1. Build a Professional Network:

- Connect with like-minded individuals and organizations.
- Engage with industry leaders and influencers to amplify your message.

2. Share Valuable Content:

- Post articles, infographics, and videos that highlight your advocacy efforts.
- Use LinkedIn's publishing platform to reach a wider audience.

3. Join and Create Groups:

- Participate in relevant LinkedIn Groups to discuss advocacy topics.
- Create your own group to foster a community around your cause.

4. Utilize LinkedIn Events:

- Host webinars and discussions to educate and engage your audience.
- Promote events to increase awareness and participation in your advocacy initiatives.

5. Engage with Your Audience:

- Respond to comments and messages to build relationships.
- Encourage discussions to create a sense of community.

CHALLENGES IN BUILDING ONLINE ANTI-FOOD WASTE COMMUNITIES

1. Awareness and Engagement:

- Difficulty in raising awareness about food waste issues.
- Challenges in engaging users who may not see food waste as a pressing concern.

2. Misinformation:

- Spread of myths and misconceptions about food waste, leading to confusion.
- Difficulty in countering false information effectively.

3. Diverse Audience:

- Varied interests and motivations among community members (e.g., environmental, economic, social).
- Need for tailored messaging to resonate with different groups.

4. Sustainability of Engagement:

- Maintaining long-term interest and participation from community members.
- Overcoming "event fatigue" where users lose interest after initial engagement.

5. Technical Barriers:

- Limited access to technology or internet in some communities.
- User unfamiliarity with online platforms and digital literacy challenges.

6. Resource Limitations:

- Lack of funding or resources to support community initiatives.
- Difficulty in finding volunteers or committed members to help manage the community.

SUCCESS STORIES

FOOD BANK OF CENTRAL & EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA



1. Social Media Engagement:

- Utilized platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to share updates, success stories, and volunteering opportunities.
- Created engaging content, including videos and infographics, to raise awareness about food insecurity.

2. Online Fundraising Campaigns:

- Launched targeted digital fundraising campaigns during key events (e.g., Giving Tuesday).
- Utilized crowdfunding platforms to reach a wider audience and gather donations online.

3. Community Building:

- Established a dedicated Facebook group for volunteers and community members to share experiences and resources.
- Encouraged members to advocate for food security policies and share personal stories.

4. Partnerships with Local Influencers:

- Collaborated with local chefs and influencers to promote events and initiatives, increasing visibility and engagement.
- Hosted virtual cooking classes and discussions on food justice, attracting diverse participants.

Outcomes:

- Increased Engagement and build new power/
- Engaged over 300 community members through online initiatives.
- Advocacy Success:
- Mobilized community members to participate in local food security advocacy initiatives.
- Created online spaces to highlight work of community groups and present them as experts



DISCUSSION & QUESTIONS

- 1. "In your experience, how have digital and social media tools transformed your organization's approach to community engagement in the anti-hunger space, and what specific strategies have you found most effective in reaching and mobilizing your target audience?"
- 2. "What challenges have you encountered in leveraging digital and social media for advocacy and community building in the fight against hunger, and how do you envision overcoming these obstacles to enhance your impact in the community?"

QUESTIONS & THANK YOU

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