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# Cooking Matters

National campaign by Share Our Strength, administered  
by The Idaho Foodbank

IMPACT REPORT

AUGUST 2020



Together,  
we can solve  
hunger.

*Cooking Matters is helping end childhood hunger by inspiring families to make healthy, affordable food choices. The program teaches parents and caregivers with limited food budgets to shop for and cook healthy meals. Cooking Matters is a national campaign by Share Our Strength, an organization working to end hunger and poverty.*

## A Community-Based Program

The Idaho Foodbank offers the six-week Cooking Matters course to adults, seniors, kids, teens and families. Each course is team-taught by a volunteer chef and nutrition educator and covers nutrition, meal preparation, grocery shopping and food budgeting. After each class, participants take home a bag of groceries so they can practice what they just learned. In the end, people learn how to prepare meals that are healthy AND tasty on a tight budget. Cooking Matters also offers store tours where participants learn how to shop, plan and budget for healthy and affordable meals.

## Solving Hunger in Idaho 2020 FISCAL YEAR

<b>63</b>	cooking/in-store classes statewide
<b>90%</b>	graduation rate for six-week course
<b>974</b>	participants statewide
<b>162</b>	volunteers statewide

## Survey results:

- Of the program participants who attended at least three classes, **96%** reported an increase in how often they eat fruit, vegetables, whole grains or low-fat dairy.
- Of the program participants who attended at least three classes, **50%** reported an increase in healthy food preparation skills.
- Participants reported that they were more confident that they would be able to afford enough food. Before the course, families "sometimes" worried that food might run out each month; six months later, they "rarely" worried about this.



## Covid-19 Impact

The COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing best practices has made the Cooking Matters program challenging to continue in 2020. However, The Idaho Foodbank has pivoted to providing cooking, health, time-saving and money-saving tips through flyers, e-newsletters, social media posts, and website blogs.

The Idaho Foodbank is committed to providing the tools and information for people struggling with food insecurity, even if the normal programs need to be temporarily paused.

Extensive research shows that healthy food choices lead to healthier lives for individuals in all aspects of their life. Healthy individuals equates to stronger communities for all of us.

The Cooking Matter's classes are an integral component of the educational program at The Idaho Foodbank. The first-ever long-term study of Cooking Matters showed the six-week cooking, shopping and nutrition course has a powerful, sustained impact that is significantly greater than changes that would have occurred without an intervention.

"I have been a cook for over 60 years and owned a bed and breakfast. At our first class we were asked why we signed up for this class. My answer was everyone loves going to Grandma's house to eat. My background in cooking was butter, cream, salt, and sugar. I have been told I cannot eat that way anymore. After taking these classes I have learned you can add flavor with herbs and spices instead of adding butter and sugar."

– Adult Class student, Colleen,  
North Central



### About The Idaho Foodbank

The Idaho Foodbank is an independent, donor-supported, nonprofit organization and is the largest statewide distributor of free food assistance in Idaho. The Idaho Foodbank was established in 1984 and since that time has distributed millions of pounds of food through its facilities in Lewiston, Meridian and Pocatello. In the last fiscal year, The Foodbank provided food for more than 18.6 million meals to Idahoans living with food insecurity. The Foodbank distributes food through a network of more than 400 partners including schools, food pantries, senior centers, feeding sites, shelters, mobile pantries and churches. Recognizing the crucial connection between hunger and health, The Idaho Foodbank focuses on providing nutritious food and collaborates with community organizations to promote nutrition education, wellness tools and healthy living. Visit [idahofoodbank.org](http://idahofoodbank.org) for more information. Find us on your favorite social media platform.



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The only Idaho nonprofit to receive a four-star rating for 11 consecutive years.