



WEBINAR RESOURCE SHEET

Food Insecurity: Faith, Farms & Feeding Our Communities

Panel conversation · September 8, 2026 · Hosted and Sponsored by University Christian Church, Austin, Texas

Every website, organization, program, book, and scripture our panelists referred to is now gathered in one place. Click any underlined title to open it. Items tagged **MENTIONED** were named during the webinar. Items tagged **LEARN MORE** are trusted sources on a topic the speakers raised.

Meet the Panelists

Andrea Abel

Executive Director,
FarmShare Austin,
Texas.

Rev. Dr. Heber Brown III

Executive Director, Black
Church Food Security
Network and author of
Nothing More Sacred.

Edwin Marty

Food Policy Manager, City
of Austin, Texas, Office of
Climate Action and
Resilience.



By the Numbers

Figures as cited by the speakers during the webinar.

25M

food-insecure people
in the U.S.

40%

of U.S. food is wasted,
from farm to fork

1M+ lbs

of food wasted everyday
in Austin

1 in 4

children in the Austin
area face food insecurity

~17 acres

of farmland lost per day
in Austin–Travis County

58+

years old: the average
age of a U.S. farmer

The Food System, Seed to Table and Beyond

Andrea Abel described a food system as circular: how food is grown and who grows it, how it is distributed and who it reaches, what happens at the table, and what happens to the excess.





SECTION 1

The Panelists' Organizations



Where to find each speaker's work.

FarmShare Austin

MENTIONED

Andrea Abel: Grows a healthy, just, and equitable local food system through community food access and new-farmer training. Programs named: **Fresh for Less** markets (accepts SNAP), the **Farmer Education** program, and an 8–10 week **CSA** with congregational host sites.

farmshareaustin.org

Black Church Food Security Network

MENTIONED

Rev. Dr. Heber Brown III: Helps congregations grow food, connect with Black farmers, and use church land, kitchens, and more for food ministry.

blackchurchfoodsecurity.net

City of Austin – Office of Climate Action & Resilience

MENTIONED

Edwin Marty: Home of the city's food policy work: community food production, institutional food purchasing, and access to healthy, affordable food.

<https://www.austintexas.gov/climate>



SECTION 2

Hunger, Food Access & Federal Programs



The data and programs behind the opening discussion and the policy Q&A.

Feeding America – Map the Meal Gap

MENTIONED

The report cited in the opening: food insecurity reaches every U.S. county, and about 25 million food-insecure people earn too much to qualify for federal nutrition help.

map.feedingamerica.org

USDA ERS – Food Security in the U.S.

MENTIONED

The federal food security data series.

<https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us>

SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)

MENTIONED

FarmShare reports SNAP shoppers at its markets have been cut in half as enrollment drops.

fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program

Your Texas Benefits – Apply for SNAP in Texas

LEARN MORE

The state portal for applying for SNAP and other assistance.

yourtexasbenefits.com

Double Up Food Bucks

MENTIONED

Dollar-for-dollar match on fruits and vegetables for SNAP shoppers, offered at FarmShare's Fresh for Less markets.

doubleupfoodbucks.org

National School Lunch Program

MENTIONED

Free and reduced-price school meals, raised in the Q&A about effects on children.

fns.usda.gov/nslp

H.R. 1 (119th Congress, 2025)

MENTIONED

The federal law referenced in the Q&A in connection with SNAP cuts.

congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/1

USDA ERS – Food Price Outlook

LEARN MORE

Tracks the rising food prices the panel described.

ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-price-outlook

Protecting Immigrant Families

LEARN MORE

Plain-language guidance for immigrant families worried about using food programs, relevant to the fear of ICE at public markets that Andrea described.

pifcoalition.org





SECTION 3

Farms, Farmland & Local Food



Land, farmers, and the price of food.

USDA Census of Agriculture

[LEARN MORE](#)

Source for national farmer demographics. The average U.S. farmer is over 58 years old.
nass.usda.gov/AgCensus

American Farmland Trust – Farms Under Threat

[LEARN MORE](#)

National research on farmland loss. Locally, Edwin cited roughly 17 acres a day lost in Austin–Travis County.
farmland.org

Central Texas Farmers Co-op

[MENTIONED](#)

Edwin Marty: A regional co-op that aggregates produce from many farms and sells it through a CSA.
<https://www.centraltexasfarmers.com/>

LocalHarvest – Find a CSA

[LEARN MORE](#)

Find community supported agriculture farms near you. A congregation can host a pickup site or run its own CSA with a farmer.
localharvest.org/csa

True Cost of Food – The Rockefeller Foundation

[LEARN MORE](#)

An accessible introduction to **true cost accounting**, the hidden water, soil, air, and health costs not reflected in the price of food.
<https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/reports/true-cost-of-food-measuring-what-matters-to-transform-the-u-s-food-system/>

EWG Farm Subsidy Database

[LEARN MORE](#)

Shows where federal crop subsidies go (corn, soybeans, cotton) compared with fruits and vegetables.
farm.ewg.org



Center for Good Food Purchasing

LEARN MORE

A leading framework for **values-based institutional food purchasing**, Edwin's one-policy answer: weigh local economies, sustainability, workforce, and animal welfare, not just the lowest bid.

goodfoodpurchasing.org

Third-party certifications Edwin named

LEARN MORE

Examples: USDA Organic (environment), Fair Food Program (valued workforce), Certified Humane (animal welfare).

<https://www.usda.gov/farming-and-ranching/organic-farming>



“Food should taste like somewhere as much as it should taste like something.”

Edwin Marty



SECTION 4

Food Waste & Recovery



“Food waste is the most solvable of all of our food system challenges.” – Edwin Marty

Sunday Lunchbox

MENTIONED

Andrea Abel: Austin partner that preserves and dehydrates FarmShare's surplus produce and redistributes it in the community.

<https://sundaylunchbox.com/index.html>

ReFED

LEARN MORE

National data and solutions on wasted food. About 40% of U.S. food is wasted from farm to fork.

refed.org

[Austin Resource Recovery](#)

[LEARN MORE](#)

Austin's zero-waste and composting programs. The city estimates more than 1 million pounds of food are wasted in Austin daily.

austintexas.gov/departments/austin-resource-recovery

[EPA – Wasted Food Scale](#)

[LEARN MORE](#)

Ranks the best ways to keep food out of landfills, where it releases greenhouse gases.

epa.gov/sustainable-management-food



SECTION 5

Growing Food & Climate-Ready Farming



Gardens, extension services, and preparing for weather extremes.

[Texas A&M AgriLife Extension – Travis County](#)

[MENTIONED](#)

Edwin Marty: Your county Extension office, funded by tax dollars, which teaches home food growing. Call and tell them food production is a community priority.

<https://travis-tx.tamu.edu/>

[AgriLife Extension – Williamson & Hays Counties](#)

[MENTIONED](#)

Neighboring counties with a stronger local food-production focus. Hays County:

hays.agrilife.org.

williamson.agrilife.org

[Austin Parks & Recreation – Community Gardens](#)

[MENTIONED](#)

Edwin Marty: About 50 community gardens on public land, with a newly updated website and program staffer.

<https://www.austintexas.gov/parks/programs/community-gardens-program-overview>

[Keep Growing Detroit](#)

[LEARN MORE](#)

Supports the 1,400+ urban gardens in Detroit raised as an example in the Q&A.

<https://www.detroitagriculture.net/>

[NRCS EQIP High Tunnel Initiative](#)

[MENTIONED](#)

The federal program Andrea mentioned that helps farmers buy high tunnels and caterpillar tunnels for climate-forward farming.

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/eqip-high-tunnel-initiative>

NOAA – El Niño & La Niña (ENSO)

LEARN MORE

Official outlooks behind the audience question about El Niño and food and water shortages.

climate.gov/enso



Texas Water Development Board – State Water Plan

LEARN MORE

Background on Andrea's point that the future of farming in Texas depends on water.

twdb.texas.gov/waterplanning/swp



SECTION 6

Advocacy & Civic Engagement



Responses to the questions on policy, voting, and what congregations can do.

Bread for the World

MENTIONED

Rev. Dr. Heber Brown III (board member): Christian advocacy on federal hunger policy. It runs advocacy days that bring congregations to Washington, D.C.

bread.org

Austin–Travis County Food Policy Board

MENTIONED

Advises the City Council and Commissioners Court on the food system. Andrea serves on this board.

<https://www.austintexas.gov/boards-commissions/board/austin-travis-county-food-policy-board>

Austin–Travis County Food Plan

MENTIONED

The region's first food plan, a framework for turning strategies into action and advocacy.

<https://austin-travis-county-food-plan-austin.hub.arcgis.com/>

Bolder Advocacy

LEARN MORE

Explains what 501(c)(3) nonprofits and congregations can do: issue advocacy, nonpartisan candidate forums, and voter engagement.

<https://afj.org/bolder-advocacy/>

[IRS – Political Campaign Activity Rules for 501\(c\)\(3\)s](#)

LEARN MORE

The official rule Andrea described: advocate on issues, never for or against candidates.
irs.gov/charities-non-profits/charitable-organizations/th...

[VoteTexas.gov](#)

LEARN MORE

Voter registration and polling information for congregations that register voters or offer rides to the polls.
votetexas.gov

“It’s not designed for mass production. It’s designed for mass inspiration.”

Rev. Dr. Heber Brown III, on church demonstration gardens



SECTION 7

Faith, Scripture & Books



The texts, ideas, and books the speakers drew on.

[Nothing More Sacred: Radical Stories of Black Church Faith, Food, and Freedom](#)

MENTIONED

Rev. Dr. Heber Brown III’s forthcoming book on the relationship between faith and farming.
<https://www.heberbrown.com/about>

[The Prophetic Imagination – Walter Brueggemann](#)

LEARN MORE

The classic book behind “prophetic imagination,” a phrase Rev. Brown used to describe new ways of being church.
<https://www.fortresspress.com/store/product/9781506449302/The-Prophetic-Imagination>

[ABCD Institute – Asset-Based Community Development](#)

MENTIONED

The approach Rev. Brown described: start with what is already in your hands, such as kitchens, buses, parking lots, and classrooms.
<https://abcdinstitute.org/>

Faith the size of a mustard seed

MENTIONED

Matthew 17:20 and 13:31-32. Rev. Brown's example of agrarian scripture many people have never seen firsthand.

biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+17%3A20%3B+Matth...

Jesus and the fig tree

MENTIONED

Mark 11:12-14.

biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+11%3A12-14&version=...

Feeding miracles

MENTIONED

Mark 6:30-44. "Many of the miracles we celebrate ... are ones where hungry people get fed."

biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+6%3A30-44&version=N...

Communion and the land

MENTIONED

1 Corinthians 11:23-26. Church rituals with deep roots in agriculture.

biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+11%3A23-26...

Small Is Beautiful & "appropriate technology"

LEARN MORE

E.F. Schumacher's idea from the 1960s-70s that Edwin cited as a hopeful way to approach solar, wind, and automation in farming.

centerforneweconomics.org

The Magic School Bus

MENTIONED

Rev. Brown's model for faith formation: take kids outside, where everything is a learning opportunity.

<https://www.youtube.com/@TheMagicSchoolBusOfficial>



SECTION 8

From Disciples Home Missions & Our Hosts

Stay connected after the webinar.

Disciples Mission Hub

MENTIONED

DHM's online forum where congregations and individuals join, connect, and learn more about these issues.

disciplesmissionhub.org

Disciples Home Missions

Equipping Disciples for Christ and connecting people to the life-changing love of God.
discipleshomemissions.org

Be The Neighbor

Justice-based service-learning trips across the U.S. In Austin the focus is food justice, and groups volunteer at FarmShare.
<https://www.betheneighbor.org/>

University Christian Church Austin

The host congregation and its Endowment for Creative Ministry sponsored the webinar.
<https://www.ucc-austin.org/>

Disciples in Mission

**Everyone. Everywhere.
Every Need.**





12 Ideas for Congregations



Practical next steps the panelists suggested.

- 1 **Know your neighbors.** Check in with the people right around you. (Andrea)
- 2 **Lead, not just volunteer.** Serve on a local food nonprofit's board of directors. (Andrea)
- 3 **Host a CSA pickup.** Your purchases sustain a nonprofit's food-access work. (Andrea)
- 4 **Tithe your food budget.** Find what your congregation spends on food a year and direct part of it to local farmers. (Heber)
- 5 **Adopt a farmer.** Build a relationship, not a transaction. Pray for farm families by name. (Heber)
- 6 **Sync calendars.** Plan church meals around the harvest season, not the Friday before. (Heber)
- 7 **Start young.** Bring food and farming into Sunday school and VBS, take field trips, and fund paid internships. (Heber)
- 8 **Start a buying co-op.** Pool neighbors to buy in bulk from farmers and share boxes with those in need. (Edwin)
- 9 **Repurpose what you have.** Kitchens, church vans, and parking lots can all serve food ministry. (Heber)
- 10 **Plant a demonstration garden.** Grow towers or waist-high beds "for mass inspiration." (Heber)
- 11 **Call Extension.** Ask your county AgriLife office to prioritize home food growing. (Edwin)
- 12 **Make hunger a campaign issue.** Register voters, offer rides to the polls, and host nonpartisan candidate forums. (Heber & Andrea)

Keep the conversation going...

Join **DisciplesMissionHub.org** to connect with congregations and individuals working on food insecurity.



Powered by Disciples Home Missions