



The Rural Good Food Connection

► A joint initiative of Well Fed Arkansas and the Arkansas Rural Health Partnership



ARKANSAS RURAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

► Arkansas Rural Health Partnership: We know rural health.

In 2022, the Arkansas Rural Health Partnership (ARHP) launched The Good Food Rx (through initial funding from a USDA Delta Health Care Services grant) to address food insecurity in seniors with chronic disease. Participants are provided with healthy prepared meals delivered to their door, nutritious recipes, and remote cooking classes. Local community health workers and/or nursing students offer one-on-one patient education, coaching, and connection to resources. In a two-year pilot (2022-2023), The Good Food Rx served 68 patients, with over 2,600 total meals provided. In the future, ARHP will partner with member healthcare organizations to launch locations across rural Arkansas.

Since 2008, the non-profit has actively engaged diverse cross-sector organizations to pioneer a new rural health reality. Efforts strive to support and strengthen the rural health workforce, rural hospital sustainability, and improve health and wellness outcomes by addressing systemic access and equity barriers. Current ARHP members include 19 rural hospitals, 3 teaching medical institutions, and 2 federally qualified health centers. For more information, visit arruralhealth.org.

The Rural Good Food Connection brings together two well known and respected grassroots, non-profit organizations with a rich history of impacting positive change in Arkansas communities.



► Well Fed Arkansas: We know healthy food access.

In Fall 2022, Well Fed Arkansas launched a multi-year research pilot (funded by a USDA Delta Health Care Services grant) in partnership with Communities Unlimited and UAMS East. Through the Produce Prescription (PRx) model, eligible participants (Medicare and/or Medicaid patients with a diet-related illness) checked in each month with an assigned healthcare worker at a host clinic site (UAMS East). Each month, Well Fed sourced and distributed up to 50+ pounds of available fruits and vegetables to eat and cook with for free for a minimum of 12 months. Well Fed and clinic staff regularly collected core metrics, along with regular biometric evaluations and post-program surveys to support impact

evaluations. Over 10,000 pounds of nutritious food was distributed, with 50+ household members impacted monthly. Participants reported weight loss, Hemoglobin A1C reduction of 2+ points, blood pressure reduction to normal levels, and more. Formal pilot results will be published in 2025.

Since 2020, Well Fed Arkansas has worked to create a new future for families who are food insecure and empower them to live healthy. Efforts work to combat food insecurity by mobilizing health food access and education. The organization works in tandem with local communities to offer free healthy foods and nutrition coaching through mobile pop-up markets and mobile food box distribution. Well Fed Arkansas works with local farmers and wholesale grocers to source healthy food and support the local economy. For more information, visit wellfedar.org.

GOOD FOOD TO SUPPORT THE HEALTH & WELLNESS OF RURAL ARKANSANS

Leveraging Dynamic Partners, Expertise & Innovation to Bridge the Food Insecurity Gap in Rural Arkansas

Beginning in 2025, the Arkansas Rural Health Partnership (ARHP) and Well Fed Arkansas will partner together with rural hospitals and federally qualified health centers to launch The Rural Good Food Connection. The new initiative combines the expertise of the non-profit organizations and offers a tailor-made approach to addressing food insecurity in rural Arkansas. The model breaks the mold of a one-size-fits-all solution to food insecurity by offering two good food options dependent on the needs of the individual. Healthy pre-made meals will be delivered by community health workers for those with mobility concerns and/or significant time constraints (i.e. homebound seniors, new moms, etc.). For those able to cook simple meals, nutritious and easy-to-follow meal prep kits will be available for pick-up at partnering rural hospitals and federally qualified health centers. These local, rural healthcare organizations will serve as the prep kitchens, food delivery staff, pick up locations, and overall community hub for initiative efforts. Throughout the initiative, participants will utilize remote patient monitoring devices and wearables to track improved health behaviors and outcomes, including a reduction in weight, blood pressure, Hemoglobin A1C, and more. Participants will also provide additional healthcare utilization data to support the impact evaluation (i.e. frequency of primary care visits, utilization of emergency room, hospital admission, new and/or cancelled prescriptions, etc.).

