

# EXTENSION SNAPSHOT

Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit

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**Illinois Extension**

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

## Coalition supports food safety, food access, and expansion opportunities through grants to local organizations

Many families struggle to have adequate access to enough nutritious foods to support an active and healthy lifestyle. There is no one answer to the issue and attempting to solve this struggle for families requires a multi-faceted, collaborative approach. University of Illinois Extension SNAP-Education Educator Rebecca Crumrine has seen this approach create immense impact locally and one example is through a coalition she participates in called the Healthy Eating Active Living - Food System Partners (HEAL-FSP).

“A true collaboration of multi-sector partners, HEAL Food System Partners have worked together for six years towards long-term, sustainable changes,” explained Rebecca. “The hope is our team of partners can impact the local meal gap with nutritious foods by working together addressing food access, nutrition education & family stabilization, charitable food technical assistance, and policy & food system development.”

As a portion of the work they do, HEAL-FSP has been able to leverage funds received from the Community Foundation of Central Illinois to support changes across individuals, organizations, communities, and policies. By working across these different areas behavior change, access, and necessary support have been layered across the community creating a much greater collective effect.

To support the work happening in partner organizations, HEAL-FSP created grants that could help build capacity within the local charitable food system, increase healthy food access for the community, enhance food safety operations for organizations, and offer expansion opportunities. In the fall of 2023, these grants received 33 applications and between November 2023 to January 2024, HEAL-FSP was able to award 20 grants totaling \$9,500 going directly to food pantries and community gardens across the Tri-County.

“Supporting local systems and needs with our funds has been an important priority, and the grants are just one example of this at work,” stated Rebecca Crumrine. “Partners receiving grants have been able to use the funds to purchase necessary items such as freezers, fridges, shelving, garden tools, raised beds, compost, and more to better serve their community.”

Illinois Extension SNAP-Ed has worked to provide backbone support to the HEAL-FSP coalition across all the action teams since the start. With a proven record of collaboration, HEAL-FSP continues to strive towards solutions driven by the community and for the community to go beyond filling bellies to nourishing bodies and futures for Tri-County residents. If you are interested in learning more about HEAL Food System Partners visit: [healthyhoi.org/ending-hunger-together](https://healthyhoi.org/ending-hunger-together).



Photo by Rebecca Crumrine | Illinois Extension

*Christ Alive! Church food pantry was one of 20 local organizations who received grant money from HEAL-Food System Partners. HEAL-FSP is a team of partners, including U of I Extension SNAP-Education, who work together to address food access, nutrition education & family stabilization, charitable food technical assistance, and policy & food system development.*

### **Rebecca Crumrine**

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