



Paper Plate Campaign

A paper plate campaign is an excellent way to deliver powerful, personal messages about food insecurity in your community. Paper plates with handwritten messages can be an effective way to share stories of your neighbors facing food insecurity in a succinct and moving way to your community members, volunteers, congregations and elected officials.

And, best of all, it's pretty simple.

- First, purchase plain paper plates at your local store, avoiding plates with coatings because they are difficult to write on.
- Schedule a time when pantry visitors might have time to write their own message on the plates. The best time is usually when they are waiting in line.
- Think about what question(s) you'd like to ask. They could be something like the following:
 - *How is the food you receive important to you and your family?*
 - *Why do you come to the food pantry/agency?*
 - *What would happen if the help you receive (food from the pantry, SNAP benefits, senior center meals, etc.) was cut?*
 - *What would you like your elected officials to know about you and your family?*
- Ask the person to include their first name and age on the plate.

There are many ways you can use your completed paper plates:

- Use them as part of your food drive communications, hanging them in a public location such as the narthex of a church or the lobby of a sponsoring business. They can also be a powerful backdrop for a press conference or fundraiser.
- Take a photo of the paper plates as table settings (with silverware and a placemat) and print them out on 11" x 17" paper. Use the printed copies as placemats at your next potluck or meeting.
- Invite your elected officials to tour your local food pantry and give them the paper plates.
- Consider the plates constituent letters, delivering them to local, state or federal elected officials or their staff. Set up a meeting with your legislator to deliver the plates and use the opportunity to have a discussion about the need to strengthen and protect hunger-relief programs. (If you're using them in this way, it's useful to ask people to include their zip code on their plates.)
- Share the stories in your newsletter or bulletin, or to open and center a meeting.
- Use the plates on social media channels to share the stories of our neighbors facing food insecurity more broadly.