



## Making Ends Meet LNC Class XXVI

### Overview

Making Ends Meet is an interactive role-playing activity that demonstrates the struggles involved in obtaining food when faced with limited resources. The goal of this activity is to increase awareness of food insecurity and the difficulties many individuals encounter in obtaining adequate amounts of nutritious food. Participants, organized in teams, role-play individuals struggling to feed their families. During this simulation, participants must take into account their defined income, expenses, special events, and changes in their lives when determining how much money they can spend on food. While the complex realities of food insecurity cannot be fully replicated by a simulation, "Making Ends Meet" highlights issues and challenges in a compelling and eye-opening exercise.

### Objectives

Participants will be able to

- Appreciate the relationship between hunger and poverty
- Identify major barriers to food security
- Increase awareness about hunger, poverty, and food insecurity

### Definition

Food security is defined as access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. At minimum, this includes the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods and the assured ability to acquire personally acceptable foods in a socially acceptable way. Characteristics of a food secure community include:

- The availability of a variety of foods at a reasonable cost
- Ready access to grocery stores and other food sources
- Enough personal income to purchase adequate food to meet nutritional needs of all household members
- Freedom to choose acceptable foods
- Personal confidence in the safety and quantity of food available
- Easy access to good information and nutrition

### The Rules

Each team will be assigned a scenario and will shop for enough healthy food for themselves and their "family" for a week. All team members must be active participants in the decision-making process and grocery shopping process.

- Teams are given a maximum amount of money they can spend on food for the week. This figure is highlighted in green on each scenario. They are not required to spend all the money available to them.
- Teams should keep in mind extenuating circumstances, i.e. living in a shelter, when making purchasing decisions.
- Teams will attempt to get a wide variety of healthy food including grains, proteins, vegetables, fruits, and dairy products.
- Teams must stay together during shopping, unless instructed otherwise.
- During the shopping activity, teams may decide to not purchase food for all family members, i.e. parents might eat less so their children can eat well.
- Common expenses (clothing, school supplies, medical expenses, etc.) and emergency expenses are not factored into these scenarios and would present an additional financial burden.
- Some teams may be presented with additional constraints or challenges during the course of the simulation.
- Teams should take a picture of the contents of their cart and a picture of their receipt after checking out.

## Debriefing

After the shopping activity, the full class will discuss their decisions and choices. Some questions that may be addressed include:

- Did everyone think they got enough food to eat to last the week?
- Did everyone get their first choice of foods they wanted?
- What problems did your group have obtaining food?
- How did living situation or food restrictions affect your shopping decisions?
- What were some of the strategies your group used to choose what you purchased?
- What would have made shopping easier? More challenging?
- What might be some impacts of consistently living and shopping in these types of circumstances?
- What factors contribute to situations requiring individuals to make tough decisions around feeding their families?

## Making Ends Meet Scenarios and Group Assignments

### Scenario One (A&B)

Scenario One A: Bradley Ballou, Tracy Zimmerman, Shelley Blake, Emily Gangi, Mike Mazzola

Scenario One B: Marshall Cherry, Tia Jones, Sharon Hirsch, McGregor Holmes

You and your husband are recent immigrants. You have a 4-year-old daughter and are expecting a baby in 4 months. You have very limited spoken and written English skills. Your husband does construction work when he can find it. Your monthly income is **\$780**. You live in one room of a 2-bedroom apartment that you share with 2 other families. You pay **\$310/month** for rent. You send **\$350** home every month to family. You spend **\$100/month** for public transportation. You have no phone. Though you are not US Citizens, you meet the criteria for benefits and your sponsor has helped you navigate the system. The unborn baby counts as a member of the household for WIC but not for SNAP. Your SNAP benefits are **\$331/month**. You qualify for pregnancy Medicaid and you have WIC vouchers for yourself—**WIC Pregnancy Food Package (\$50)** and for your 4-year-old **WIC Child's Package (\$40)**, which helps with the weekly grocery bill.

<b>Family of Three: 2 Adults, 1 Child</b>	
Monthly Income	\$ 780.00
Monthly Fixed Expenses	\$ (760.00)
Monthly Funds Remaining	\$ 20.00
Monthly SNAP	\$ 331.00
Monthly WIC	\$ 90.00
<b>Weekly Cash and Benefits Available</b>	<b>\$ 101.77*</b>
<i>Total Per Person Per Day</i>	<i>\$ 4.85</i>

\*You may spend up to this amount during the simulation.

### Scenario Two (A&B)

Scenario Two A: Joe Deehan, Kathy Morris, Cheryl Cherry, Kevin Leonard, Amy Murphy Curlis

Scenario Two B: Catherine Moga Bryant, Mike Riley, Mark McIntire, Jinky Rosselli, Vicki Parker

You are an administrative assistant at a medium-sized media company. You are the never-married single parent of three children (a 12-week-old infant, a 6-year-old, and an 8-year-old). Your monthly income is **\$2400**. You pay **\$980/month** for mortgage payments and **\$200/month** for utilities and insurance. You pay **\$700/month** in child care costs. You pay **\$200/month** in car payments and **\$100/month** on your phone bill. You are fully breastfeeding your newborn (breastfeeding during the night and providing pumped breast milk for during the day). To access the **\$500-\$600/month** in food support benefits that you qualify for, you must have a child support order in place. You left an abusive relationship and are afraid to push for child support, so you are not receiving these benefits.

<b>Family of Four: 1 Adult, 3 Children</b>	
Monthly Income	\$ 2400.00
Monthly Fixed Expenses	\$(2180.00)
Monthly Funds Remaining	\$ 220.00
Monthly SNAP	\$ -
Monthly WIC	\$ -
<b>Weekly Cash and Benefits Available</b>	<b>\$ 50.77*</b>
<i>Total Per Person Per Day</i>	<i>\$ 1.81</i>

\*You may spend up to this amount during the simulation.

### Scenario Three (A&B)

Scenario Three A: Cheryl Parquet, Julie Smith, Ryan Schwiebert, Arthur Salido

Scenario Three B: Venetia Skahen, Weyling White, Carol Shields, Cort Bennett

You are a widowed single parent with a one-year-old daughter. You moved to a new city shortly before your daughter was born and have no local family support and few friends. You were recently laid off from your job. You have found part-time temporary work earning \$8.00/hour. Your monthly income is **\$1080/month**. Childcare is **\$400/month**. Rent/utilities are **\$650/month** and you spend **\$50/month** for your telephone. Your monthly SNAP benefits are **\$353/month** and you receive WIC benefits—**WIC Child's Package (\$40)**—for your daughter. You have **celiac disease** and must eat a strict gluten-free diet.

<b>Family of Two: 1 Adult, 1 Child</b>	
Monthly Income	\$ 1080.00
Monthly Fixed Expenses	\$(1100.00)
Monthly Funds Remaining	\$ (20.00)
Monthly SNAP	\$ 353.00
Monthly WIC	\$ 40.00
<b>Weekly Cash and Benefits Available</b>	<b>\$ 90.69*</b>
<i>Total Per Person Per Day</i>	<i>\$ 6.48</i>

\*You may spend up to this amount during the simulation.

### Scenario Four

Meredith Switzer, Michael Youth, Robert Doreauk, Tara Campbell

You live with your husband and 2 children (ages 2 and 8) in a one-bedroom apartment. Your 8-year-old has a **severe peanut allergy**. Your husband was injured while working a temporary construction job for which he was being paid under the table. He is unable to work but hasn't been able to secure compensation for his injury. Most of your time is devoted to caring for him and your children. You work part-time when you are able, earning about **\$900/month** most months. You have applications pending for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and for disability benefits but are not receiving anything at this time. Your mortgage is **\$800/month** and utilities are **\$100/month**. You have an old car that is paid for and \$2200 in a bank account but owe thousands in pending medical bills, for which you have no insurance. You are in danger of losing your home. Your SNAP benefits are **\$637/month**. You also receive WIC vouchers—**One WIC Child's Food Package (\$40)**—for your youngest child. Your oldest child has aged out of the WIC program.

<b>Family of Four: 2 Adults, 2 Children</b>	
Monthly Income	\$ 900.00
Monthly Fixed Expenses	\$ (900.00)
Monthly Funds Remaining	\$ 0.00
Monthly SNAP	\$ 637.00
Monthly WIC	\$ 40.00
<b>Weekly Cash and Benefits Available</b>	<b>\$ 156.23*</b>
<i>Total Per Person Per Day</i>	<i>\$ 5.58</i>

\*You may spend up to this amount during the simulation.

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### Scenario Five (A&B)

Scenario Five A: Fatima Dean, Josh Lassiter, Daniel Dent, Laura Early

Scenario Five B: Brian Franklin, Steve Biggs, Maria Ochoa, Catherine Liao

You live with your husband and 2 children (ages 3 and 5) in a two-bedroom apartment. Your husband works a production job, but has been out on short-term disability for the last few months. He has been receiving company-paid short-term disability equal to 60% of his regular base pay, or **\$1500/month**. Medical expenses total **\$300/month**. You work approximately 15 hours per week at the local grocery store earning about **\$550/month**. Your rent is **\$1,100/month**, utilities are **\$150/month**. You spend approximately **\$250/month** in childcare costs taking your husband for medical appointments. You share a car with car and insurance payments of **\$250/month**. Your SNAP benefits are **\$600/month**. You also receive one WIC voucher—**WIC Child’s Food Package (\$40)**—each month for your 3-year-old.

<b>Family of Four: 2 Adults, 2 Children</b>	
Monthly Income	\$ 2,050.00
Monthly Fixed Expenses	\$(2,050.00)
Monthly Funds Remaining	\$ 0.00
Monthly SNAP	\$ 600.00
Monthly WIC	\$ 40.00
<b>Weekly Cash and Benefits Available</b>	<b>\$ 147.69*</b>
<i>Total Per Person Per Day</i>	<i>\$ 5.27</i>

\*You may spend up to this amount during the simulation.

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### Scenario Six (A&B)

Scenario Six A: Haley Haynes, Wendy John, Jim Parker, Michelle Neal

Scenario Six B: Christian Overton, Anne Marie Robertson, Kristen Rosselli, Ricky Brown, Carmen Shaw

You are homeless with 2 small children (ages 2 and 4). You lost your job when your youngest child became sick and you had to stay home with her. You have no family in town to help or support you during this crisis. You are currently staying in a shelter that provides one meal a day for you and your children. You want to find work and the shelter is trying to help you find free childcare but currently there is none available. You are on a waiting list for a family shelter that provides training and assistance with job search and childcare. You and your children have to leave the shelter after breakfast with all of your things and can't return until just before dark. You are eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits but have not applied. You are hoping to get a job soon so you can go back to saving **\$100/month** towards first/last month's rent on an apartment. The shelter has helped you with a physical address and they give you daily tokens for public transportation. Your SNAP benefits are **\$526/month**. You also receive WIC vouchers—**Two WIC Child’s Food Packages (\$80)**—each month for your children.

<b>Family of Three: 1 Adult, 2 Children</b>	
Monthly Income	\$ 0.00
Monthly Fixed Expenses	\$ 0.00
Monthly Funds Remaining	\$ 0.00
Monthly SNAP	\$ 526.00
Monthly WIC	\$ 80.00
<b>Weekly Cash and Benefits Available</b>	<b>\$ 139.85*</b>
<i>Total Per Person Per Day</i>	<i>\$ 6.66</i>

\*You may spend up to this amount during the simulation.

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### Scenario Seven (A&B):

Scenario Seven A: Michelle Ries, Drew Steel, Kevin Utsey, Jennifer Bell

Scenario Seven B: Kyle Villemain, Sherri Yerk-Zwickl, Aimee Forehand, Schumata Brown

You are a single parent and your mother recently moved in with you because she is starting to show signs of early dementia. You were working full-time as an accountant but had to cut back your hours to help care for your mother and two young children (ages 1 and 3). You recently stopped breastfeeding when your youngest turned one. You live in a 1,500 square foot home and you pay **\$1,000/month** for your mortgage. Since you cut back your hours to 30/week (10 hours, 3 days a week), you now earn **\$2850/month**. You have health insurance through your current employer, which costs **\$150/month**. Your older home is not energy efficient, so utilities are a bit higher at **\$250/month**. Your cell phone costs **\$50/month**, and part-time daycare costs total **\$800/month**. You purchased a new car last year when working full-time, and your car payment is **\$300/month**. Your SNAP benefits are **\$282/month**.

<b>Family of Four: 2 Adults, 2 Children</b>	
Monthly Income	\$ 2,850.00
Monthly Fixed Expenses	\$(2,550.00)
Monthly Funds Remaining	\$ 300.00
Monthly SNAP	\$ 282.00
Monthly WIC	\$ 40.00
<b>Weekly Cash and Benefits Available</b>	<b>\$ 143.54*</b>
<i>Total Per Person Per Day</i>	<i>\$ 5.13</i>

\*You may spend up to this amount during the simulation.