

# impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

## Master gardeners, community gardens and gleaning help with food emergency issues

### AT A GLANCE

UI Extension Canyon County master gardeners operate two community gardens, growing an abundance of fresh local produce for the community, as well as glean to help with food insecurity issues.

### The Situation

Food needs in Canyon County affect thousands of individuals and families. Food insecurity is the economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate, nutritious and fresh food due to a lack of money or other social resources. The key drivers for food insecurity include low income, unemployment, disability and rising food costs. Impacts of food security on individuals and families include malnutrition, hunger, higher risks of chronic health conditions (diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and obesity) and increased mental stress. The food insecurity rate of Canyon County is approximately 12.5% of the total population. The 2024 Census estimates the entire population of Canyon County to be approximately 266,892, equating to 33,362 individuals within the county facing food insecurity daily. The average cost of a meal in Canyon County is \$3.67 and the additional funds required to meet food needs for the community are equal to \$21,115,000 per year.

### Our Response

The Idaho Master Gardeners created, operated, grew and supervised two important community gardens within Canyon County: Trinity Lutheran Community



Raised beds at the Canyon Springs Community Garden in Middleton. Photo by Suzanne Ubry.

Garden located in Nampa and Canyon Springs Community Garden in Middleton. The Idaho Master Gardeners in Canyon County also take it upon themselves to glean fresh produce from a multitude of local farms and producers. Fresh locally grown produce is then donated to local food banks and churches each week to help supplement and reduce emergency food needs within Canyon County. Trinity Lutheran and Canyon Springs Community Gardens have been growing and donating local food to a multitude of food banks and distribution centers from 2020 to 2025. Additionally, Canyon County master gardeners glean fresh produce from multiple local farms/orchards in the community each year for donation efforts.

## Program Outcomes

Emergency food needs in Canyon County have been directly addressed due to the intentional and directed efforts of Canyon County master gardeners from operating, growing, gleaning and donating thousands of pounds of local fresh and nutritious food each year. Through the efforts of Trinity Lutheran and Canyon Springs community gardens, as well as master gardener gleaning efforts, 84,350 pounds (over 42 tons) of fresh local food has been donated and distributed to community members of Canyon County at local food banks and other distribution centers from 2020-2025. Trinity Lutheran Community Garden averages 1,476 pounds of fresh local food per year to the community, Canyon Springs Community Garden averages 8,327 pounds of fresh local food per year to the community, and local gleaning efforts average 4,254 pounds of fresh local food per year to the community, totaling an average of over 14,000 pounds per year.

According to Feed America (2026), 1.2 pounds of food is equitable to a single meal for an individual. Through the efforts of Trinity Lutheran and Canyon Springs Community Gardens and master gardeners gleaning, a total of 70,291 meals has been donated to Canyon County community members from 2020 to 2025. UI Extension’s master gardeners, community gardens and gleaning efforts have directly contributed an estimated value of \$257,967.97 in fresh local food to the Canyon County community to help curb urgent food assistance needs and improve individual and family health. On average over \$42,995 in fresh local food is grown, gleaned, donated and distributed each year to the local community food distribution centers/food banks from this single program operated by the master gardeners.

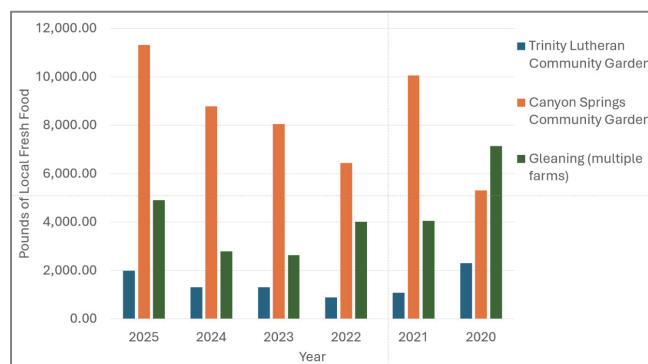
By addressing critical food access issues in Canyon County, Idaho Master Gardeners are helping with emergency food needs and community health considering malnutrition, hunger, higher risks of chronic health conditions (diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity) and increased mental stress.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Brad Stokes**, Horticulture Extension Educator • University of Idaho Extension, Canyon County • 208-459-6003 • bstokes@uidaho.edu  
11-26-bstokes-community-gardens • 5/26

Table 1. Food donations in pounds of local fresh food from 2020 to 2025.

Year	Trinity Lutheran Community Garden	Canyon Springs Community Garden	Gleaning (multiple farms)
2020	2,305.5	5,306.9	7,136.8
2021	1,080	10,056.5	4,047
2022	888	6,436	4019.4
2023	1,297	8,054	2,624.5
2024	1,305.5	8,786.9	2,795.8
2025	1,983	11,321.7	4,906.3



## The Future

UI Extension’s Idaho Master Gardeners will continue to explore additional opportunities to help curb food insecurity issues in Canyon County and the surrounding population through expanded community gardens and gleaning efforts.

## Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

- Trinity Lutheran Community Garden
- Canyon Springs Community Garden
- UI Extension Canyon County Idaho Master Gardeners