COOKING MATTERS
COLORADO:

VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION PACKET
What is Cooking Matters?

No child should grow up hungry, but 1 in 6 kids struggle with food insecurity.

Cooking Matters is a nationwide program implemented by Share Our Strength to empower low-income parents and caregivers of kids 0-5 to provide their families with healthy, budget friendly meals.

How does Cooking Matters work?

Share Our Strength partners with organizations across the country to provide Cooking Matters programming to low-income families.

Cooking Matters’ curricula is award-winning, nationally-researched and evaluated to ensure the information we provide and our teaching methods have the most impact for families. Cooking Matters programming is designed to be hands-on, skills-based, and participatory. It also provides participants with the materials and groceries they need to practice their new skills at home.
COLORADO PARTNERSHIP MODELS

- **Share Our Strength Staff:**
  - Implement programming at partner sites.

- **Full-Time Contractors:**
  - Housed at host organizations across Colorado.
  - Full-time job is to implement Cooking Matters programming.

- **Train-the-Trainners:**
  - Staff at other organizations statewide.
  - Implement Cooking Matters programming as part of their job.

Through these 3 models of implementation we are able to reach **55 of the 64 counties in Colorado.**
OUR PARTICIPANTS

Participants are typically recruited by community organizations that Cooking Matters Colorado partners with.

These organizations are already providing services to low-income communities, with Cooking Matters programming being offered as an opportunity to expand their services.

Since 1994, Cooking Matters Colorado has helped over 100,000 families shop for and cook healthier meals on a budget.

Our participants represent a wide array of backgrounds: race, ethnicity, skin color, religion, national origin, age, gender identify, sexual orientation, marital status, educational background, professional background, and physical or mental ability.

While there is no cookie cutter for a ‘typical’ participant, our priority audience is caregivers of children 0-5 years old.
Why are caregivers of children 0-5 our priority audience?

According to the USDA* one third (34.4%) of single mother families were food insecure in 2013.

Exposure to adequate nutrition at a young age sets a child up both physically and habitually for lifelong health.

Food Decision Makers - shop & provide kids with healthy meals

Crucial Development Period - adequate nutrition essential to health

Early Experiences - influences eating patterns throughout life

Behavior Change – more, lasting change in food habits & behavior

Our Long-Term Impact Evaluation found mothers with young children increased healthy, budget-friendly meal preparation significantly (even when compared to average participant).
## Cooking Courses:

- Six-week courses, 2 hours long
  - Parents
  - Adults
  - Families
- Team-taught by volunteer culinary and nutrition educators.
- After each class, participants take home a bag of groceries.
- Monday – Friday, from 8:30am – 8pm

## Cooking Matters at the Store Tours:

- Focus on:
  - shopping for healthy ingredients
  - comparing foods for cost & nutrition
- Hands-on
- Participants take home a resource book & a $10 gift card to grocery store
- Timeframes dependent event, ranging from 1-7 hrs

## Childcare Professional Trainings:

- Childcare providing site
- Focus on:
  - healthy meal prep
  - food safety
  - how to help children try new foods
  - create a positive food environment
- Earn 8 hours of Continuing Education credits
- Generally Saturdays, 9am-4pm

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**To serve even more families across the country**

- **Educational Tools:** Build on the proven success of our signature cooking courses and grocery store tours. Available for any individual to download and use in any community.

- **Cooking Matters Smartphone App**

- **Tips, Recipes, and Videos at CO.CookingMatters.org**
TOGETHER, WE ARE ENDING CHILDHOOD HUNGER!

In fiscal year 2017, we reached 13,045 families.

To graduate participants must attend at least 4 of the 6 sessions, with 88% of participants graduating.

On average, graduates:
- Plan meals 55% more often
- Compare food prices 38% more
- Run out of food 20% less often
- Reach for healthier options more often

88% of tour participants 5 weeks after the tour report saving money

Families are 17% more confident in stretching their food dollars.

76% buy more fruits and vegetables

We couldn’t make such an impact without you!
Across the state over 650 volunteers contribute over 15,000 hours of time annually!
VOLUNTEERS: YOU MAKE THIS ALL WORK!

All volunteers have the power to educate, increase self-esteem & strengthen social networks of families. Your time and contributions create a long-term solution to hunger by giving families the confidence and skills to be more self-sufficient, and improve eating habits and food budgeting.

How can you share your strength with us?
Expectations of Volunteers:

- Arrive prepared and familiar with Cooking Matters curricula.
- Arrive 30 minutes before your course or tour to set up.
- Plan to stay 30 minutes after your course or tour to clean up.
- Treat all staff, fellow volunteers, participants, and site staff with respect.
- Practice flexibility, understanding, and leadership when unexpected situations arise.
- Inform coordinator as soon as possible if you are unable to make it to your volunteer assignment. Cooking Matters and our partners do significant planning and preparation to implement programming. Volunteer commitment and communication are appreciated.
- Please be professional and friendly, and help us to raise awareness of childhood hunger and how we are combating it.
- Serve as a positive role model, inspiring families to cook healthy meals at home.
- Have fun and share your passion and knowledge while helping our community!

Expectations of Cooking Matters Colorado:

- Cooking Matters representative will provide all needed equipment and materials.
- Communicate with you before and after your course or tour.
- Active presence, support and co-facilitation alongside volunteers.
- Cooking Matters will provide volunteers with necessary content:
  - Culinary and nutrition instructors with an educator guide.
  - Cooking Matters at the Store facilitators with talking points and optional educator guide.
- Provide coaching and feedback to foster gold-standard program delivery and also provide professional development opportunities for volunteers.
- Staff and partners treat volunteers with respect and gratitude.
- Be organized, enthusiastic and supportive to provide a positive experience for volunteers
- Additional resources and activities are available as questions/interests arise.

Volunteers are the foundation of our program and are crucial to our success. Thank you for your help in making Coloradoans more food secure!
WHY VOLUNTEER WITH COOKING MATTERS?

Flexible Schedule
Make an Impact on Your Community
Engage with Others
Develop Skills
Bolster Your Network

“I get all the fun without being an employee. I like the **variety** of neighborhoods and populations we serve – it makes each class unique. I love the staff – each one is a jewel.”
-Kathleen Busenbark, *Class Assistant*

“This is a way to **share my knowledge** of cooking and to give back and help some who may need it.”
–Steve Rider, *Culinary Instructor*

“I love seeing participants **make changes** in their lives. I love being part of this great community.”
-Maria Anderson, *Nutrition Educator*

“I have had times in my life when I leaned heavily on community resources and wanted to **give back** some time and energy.”
–Charles Childers, *Culinary Instructor*

“I was surfing the web for new things to do. I had recently lost 35 pounds through nutrition and exercise and was excited to share what I learned. Cooking Matters is now the highlight of my week.”
–Dana Hall, *Class Assistant*
IF YOU VOLUNTEER WITH COURSES

• Programming is held at a variety of community organizations – such as Head Starts, schools and health clinics.
• Course teams ideally include:
  • culinary instructor
  • nutrition educator
  • classroom assistant
  • interpreter for bilingual classes
• Cooking Matters Coordinators are present for every class and will bring all materials. They will also fill any roles not filled by volunteers.
• Volunteers for childcare professionals courses will receive additional training on the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines.
IF YOU VOLUNTEER WITH TOURS

Tours teach **key lessons** about shopping healthy on a budget. Themes include:

- comparing unit prices
- reading food labels
- buying fruits and veggies on a budget
- identifying whole grains

Tour delivery models:

- **Guided Tours** – a facilitator leads a group together through four key lessons. Average size: 10-30 participants.
- **Station-Model Events** – participants tour independently through four nutrition stations with a “passport.” Average size: 40+ participants.
VOLUNTEER ROLES AND DESCRIPTIONS

Culinary Instructor –

- **2 years culinary education or experience** to be culinary instructor. Other experience may suffice (see role description for examples).
- **Courses are interactive.** We encourage practice; therefore, the culinary instructor’s role is to guide the process (not just demo) and delegate tasks to participants to experience hands-on learning.
- **Talking points:** knife skills, food safety, meal planning, healthy and low-cost substitutions, quick and easy preparation techniques, and ways to stretch ingredients over multiple meals.

Nutrition Educator –

- **2 years of education required:** Registered Dietitians or 4-year degree in nutrition, food science or dietetics desired to be nutrition educator. Other experience may suffice (see role description for examples).
- Deliver lessons via **hands-on activities, visuals and discussion.** Ask your Cooking Matters representative for a list of nutrition tools and materials available in your area.
- **Talking points:** MyPlate, nutrition labels, benefits of all forms of fruits and veggies, identifying whole grains, menu planning, setting a healthy example, and ideas for budgeting.

Class Assistant –

- **Anyone can be an assistant!** Assistants are key to ensure programming runs smoothly and that families receive the best educational experience possible.
- Take the lead on set-up: sanitize surfaces, set out equipment and ingredients, assemble take-home grocery bag for each household (with guidance from CM coordinator), wash dishes throughout class (with help from course team), assist with paperwork, help monitor for food and knife safety, and support nutrition activities.
- **Talking points:** share personal anecdotes/strategies you use at home to save time and money, healthy ingredient substitutions, preparation techniques, recipe ideas, setting a healthy example, making cooking and nutrition fun.

Tour Facilitator –

- **Anyone can be a tour facilitator!**
- **Utilizing talking points,** lead food resource management and nutrition lesson for families.
  - During guided tours, facilitators take a group around the facility together.
  - During station-model events, facilitators are placed at one of four stations – produce, grains, protein or dairy – to offer a recipe sample and deliver talking points.
Interpreters

- **Fluently bilingual** needed to be translator, certified interpreter preferred. A degree in second language or other indicators of proficiency may suffice via experience. Skills and comfort level in interpretation.
- **Translate all information and questions** in their entirety as given by volunteers and staff, and vice versa by participants.
- Please ask your Cooking Matters coordinator if it is an appropriate time to share your personal comments or questions. While everyone in the room can glean tips and ideas from lessons, our education is geared towards families who are enrolled as participants. As a result, we want to ensure that all questions/comments from educators and participants are captured so that everyone receives the same information.

Shopper

- **Anyone can be a shopper!**
- Purchase ingredients with list and gift card provided by your Cooking Matters representative.
- Use Tax Exempt number to save money (Cooking Matters provide you with one).
- Transport items to program site, using a cooler to keep perishables below 40°.
- Maintain weekly grocery budget, using saving strategies such as comparing unit prices, using sales and coupons, buying store brands, etc.
- Deliver groceries to course site 30-45 minutes before class starts, and give itemized receipt to your Cooking Matters coordinator each week.

Fundraising and Special Events

- **Anyone can help with events!**
- Roles and times vary.
- Examples include: annual Chefs Up Front fundraiser, events with the culinary community, promoting Colorado Gives Day, or one-time cooking demonstrations and resource fairs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Time Commitment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culinary Instructor</td>
<td>• Six-week Courses: 4 hours/week for 6 weeks</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Childcare Professionals: 8-10 hours for 1 day (half day considered)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition Educator</td>
<td>• Six-week Courses: 4 hours/week for 6 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Childcare Professionals: 8-10 hours for 1 day (half day considered)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Assistant</td>
<td>• Six-week Courses: 3 hours/week for 6 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Childcare Professionals: 8-10 hours for 1 day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour Facilitators</td>
<td>• Time commitment varies by implementation model. Range is 2-6 hours per tour or event.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Translator</td>
<td>• Six-week Courses: 2 hours/week for 6 weeks</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Cooking Matters at the Store Events: 2-6 hours, depending on event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopper</td>
<td>• Six-week Courses: 1 hour/week for 6 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising, Outreach Events &amp; Behind-the-Scene Projects</td>
<td>• Time commitment varies by event and project.</td>
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Times listed are averages for total hours contributed, including: duration of program, lesson planning, drive time, and set-up and clean-up.
OVERVIEW OF GOLD STANDARD TEACHING METHODS

1) **Create a Learner-Centered Environment**
   Allows participants to learn while they cook, engage in hands-on nutrition activities, and practice strategies for saving money at the store.

2) **Connect with Your Audience**
   Enables us to reach lesson objectives while tailoring messages and activities to each particular group.

3) **Facilitated Dialogue**
   Method of group teaching that involves active participation of both the learner and the educator. Meets participants where they are and creates an environment to develop realistic solutions to shared challenges.

4) **Team Teaching**
   Creates an engaging learning experience for both the participants and the instructors.

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**Tons of Helpful Resources!**

To be the most effective volunteer, use [Cooking Matters Content and Resources](#)!

Nationally developed and evaluated curricula with objectives that reach proven outcomes, and a [Volunteer Training Website](#) just for you!
YOU MAY COOK IN A SPACE THAT LOOKS LIKE THIS
YOU MAY TEACH IN A SPACE THAT LOOKS LIKE THIS
OTHER WAYS TO CONTRIBUTE

Cooking Matters Colorado is one program of Share Our Strength, which is a national 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

- While Colorado’s budget is approved by our national office, we are responsible for raising our own funds. Therefore, we rely on the Colorado community to support the success and sustainability of our programming. To donate, visit co.cookingmatters.org/donate.

- $10 Provides funds for a family to practice the skills learned in a Cooking Matters at the Store tour.
- $40 Pays for the groceries for one family throughout a 6-week Cooking Matters course.
- $300 Provides one family with six weeks of nutrition and food skills education.

With food costs being one of our largest expense, some organizations and individuals hold food drives and make in kind donations!

If you or an organization you work with might be interested in holding a food drive for Cooking Matters Colorado reach out to covolunteer@strength.org today!
The next step is to complete a New Volunteer Training!

RSVP with your local Cooking Matters representative or browse our Volunteer and Event Calendar to sign up today! While you are there, check out our upcoming courses, tours and events in your area.

Peruse our website, review our Frequently Asked Questions & our Volunteer Training Website.

Ask your Cooking Matters representative for more information about specific programming opportunities, other ways you can get involved, and resources for volunteers!

Every Kid. Healthy Food. Every Day.
Join Us!

Please contact our Community Engagement Manager, Becky Mares, if you have questions or feedback (positive or constructive) regarding your volunteer experience: bmares@strength.org or (303) 801-0327.