

## **Bio: Chris Bernard, Hunger Free Oklahoma**

Chris Bernard is a native Oklahoman who returned home in 2016 after 16 years of work and study in Austin and Chicago. Throughout his career Chris has focused on changing systems, policies, and practices to impact issues of social justice and equity including public health, criminal and juvenile justice reform, and hunger and poverty. He has extensive experience in policy, advocacy, legislative strategy, and program implementation. Chris has proven leadership in forging public/private partnerships and coalition-building to solve complex problems. He has worked inside and outside of government to affect policy, program, and legislative changes that better serve citizens, save government resources, and produce better outcomes for individuals and communities.

Chris' work has always focused on systems change, innovation, and scalability. He operates from a fundamental belief that to solve any problem at a systemic scale it takes government and private partners leveraging their respective strengths and resources.

As the founding Executive Director of Hunger Free Oklahoma, Chris has grown the organization from a staff of two to a staff of 33 in five years. He has built multiple public/private partnerships with state and local agencies that have increased the number of resources available to address hunger and the number of people who access those resources, launched three major emergency response initiatives to meet immediate need while coordinating for long-term sustainability, and worked with stakeholders across the state to maximize the impact of federal nutrition programs. He has also helped to build unprecedented collaborations amongst hunger stakeholders in Oklahoma. Through a focus on building public/private partnerships and fostering collaboration across the state, Hunger Free Oklahoma has worked with government and private partners to create and implement the largest SNAP outreach plan in Oklahoma history, create a statewide Childhood Food Security Coalition, expand the state Double Up nutrition incentive program by more than 2000% in two years, and facilitate a statewide outreach plan and rebranding of summer meals.

Under Chris' leadership, Hunger Free Oklahoma received the 2020 ONE Award from the Oklahoma Center for Nonprofits in the transformational category and recognition as a MOSAIC 2021 Top Inclusive Workplace. In 2021, Chris Bernard was selected as the Most Admired Nonprofit CEO in Oklahoma by the Journal Record.

Chris holds a BA from the University of Texas at Austin and a JD from Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law.

### **Contact Chris Bernard**

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