
Notes from 11/3/2016

Hunger Relief Conversation @ Micah's Backpack

Small group conversations to generate ideas on tackling priority issues raised by the group. Highlighted ideas received the most “dots” on where to put group energy next.

Group #1: Expanding Access for Nutritious Foods

Main Themes:

1. Develop and Expand Educational programs on nutrition and cooking fresh foods (6 dots)

- Demos
- Make clients feel part of the process rather than just telling them what to do
- Building relationships with the clients is key. Also knowing more about them and what they enjoy will create opportunities to blend what is available with what they want.
- Clients need to be engaged/ utilize experiential learning
- Recipes need to be user friendly for the clients, some have found them too complicated
- Teach clients how to preserve excess food that they have

2. Develop ways to better preserve and process fresh foods (5 dots)

Issues:

- Many types of fresh produce is easily damaged during mass transportation and/ or delivery to clients
- Many locations have limited cold storage space and don't have preservation capabilities (i.e. canning, cooking or dehydrating)

Possible solutions:

- Dehydrate produce that is damaged easily during delivery (i.e. fruit in backpacks)
- Is it possible for multiple agencies to use an agency's facilities that are equipped to preserve food (central hub for canning, cooking or dehydration)

3. Partner with local producers/community gardens to get donated food and/or negotiate discounted bulk pricing. (9 dots)

- Creating incentives
 - There is currently a tax write off for farmers who donate to food relief
 - Pre-purchasing produce to guarantee sales for farmers/ combining with other organizations to make the order larger
- Provide home gardeners with contacts for organizations to receive spare produce.
- Partner with the Glean Team
- Work with local community gardens in the NRV to provide fresh vegetables to clients
- Creating more efficient transportation from farm to food bank warehouses

4. Other ideas that were given:

- Promote home gardens

- Networking with small and large organizations to prevent waste
- Work with nutrition students/ VT faculty/ other nutrition experts on meal planning/ recipes
- SNAP Incentive Programs at Farmers Markets (SNAP Doubling, \$10/wk program, SNAP share, etc.)
- Grocery Store leftovers
- Work with local churches and food banks to provide food to homebound clients
- Fruit and veg for backpacks

Group #2: Increase educational opportunities for participants and partners

Main Themes:

1. Create a common list of resources in the NRV. (9 dots)

- a. Food security service providers
- b. Education programming providers
- c. Educational materials/resources

Notes:

- Plenty is willing to share information from upcoming focus groups on barriers to participating in classes
- Issue: who will maintain the list? Who is the back bone organization? Can we use students?
- We need a map of the agency system in the area/ who is providing what services?

2. Maintain a welcoming culture for participants, meet them where they are

- a. Educate volunteers on how to do this
- b. Not call it a class
- c. Plug participants into running the program
- d. Create client volunteers

Notes:

- Would like a how to training on inclusion.

3. Best practices for Education- Teach them to fish (1 dot)

- a. Include (facts/awareness points) materials with food distribution
- b. Information that address the root cause of poverty
- c. Classes on canning, gardening, cooking, etc.
- d. Cooking with whole fresh foods/ cook stove demonstrations and classes
- e. Accessible, interactive classes and materials
- f. Realize not everyone can go online

Notes:

- Weekend workshops, workshops at gardens, school based programming, experiential learning

4. Assessment of participant education needs

- a. Link groups working on similar goals and identify regional holes **(1 dot)**

Notes:

- Would like a training on logic model/goal setting for planning/ programming **(3 dots)**

Groups core beliefs:

- Clients need us to take into account their ability to give back while in a crisis, child care issues, physical/mental limitations
- Full inclusion- cultural, physical, age, sex, language, etc.
- Leverage everything!
- We need to stop competing for resources/funding
- Train all staff/volunteers in non judgement

Group #3: Secure Preferred Pricing and Improve the Food Distribution System

1. Create a food hub/distribution center in the NRV that will serve all organizations (19 dots)

- Develop a centralized food storage and distribution facility (refrigeration is key)
- Central Distribution site (drop off and pick up) in the NRV
- Develop a distribution hub for needed food items.
- Food Storage- Food Hub to hold the food that needs to be distributed
- Would need a centrally located easy to access space that was tractor trailer truck accessible. What about the Montgomery Christmas Store site?
- The site would need cold storage
- What organization can support this role: is there a way that feeding America could do this?
 - Problem with having to have them intermediary, not convenient, don't have what we want.
 - Feeding America has too much staff turnover.
 - Need emails about what they have on the floor.
 - Feeding America needs to look at their operation at Virginia Beach where they sort by items. Would be much more useful.
 - Partner pick up is useful but you can only do this if you are a feeding America partner and meet their qualifications.
 - Wouldn't allow support for smaller organizations.

2. Develop a 'Hunger Relief' Network (13 dots)

- Local network of providers to build collaboration
- Develop and promote a network of food access organizations
 - Who is going to coordinate these efforts?
- a. Vehicle/ Other Equipment Sharing**
 - Coolers or refrigerator blankets to transport food.
 - Shared mobile refrigerated unit that many organizations could check out, to pick up or distribute food.
- b. Information on food availability and food resources**
 - How can technology help? Database, a "connection".
 - Google docs, face book, software packages, salesforce. Facebook page is easy. Resource guide.
 - Connecting partners to share excess food, glean team, share the space
 - coordinate monthly orders
 - Connect partners with best practices, etc.
- c. Education and training**

- Asset Inventory of where to get food (purchased and donated)
- Technology for data tracking and sharing of food

3. Work together to build relationships with food providers to achieve preferred pricing (3 dots)

- Easier access to reduced/wholesale pricing
- Work with local retailers to identify preferred providers willing to sell food at cost.
- Coordinate monthly orders to achieve bulk discounts or standing discounts
- USDA foods too much paper work/trouble
- Grocery stores. (Case discount on food purchases, 10% discount)
- Major food providers (US Foods, Armark, etc.)
- Super stores
- Farmers
- Farmers markets
- Create options other than Feeding America
 - Make them less of a gatekeepers
 - They need to refine their 'best practices' for Feeding America SWVA
 - Less red tape/ regulations
- Make the most of FASWVA- group shopping and delivery
- Reinvigorate share-type food and community service program. Study what share is doing in DC, Philadelphia, Iowa, and San Diego. The share program involved community volunteers and was supported by a non-profit distribution network, where volunteers would work to break down bulk food to create boxes (providing ingredients for a whole meal at a reduced cost vs. just cans of food), churches would come get the number of boxes ordered through their network. The cost was \$12 a box, in exchange for 2 hours of community service for \$36 worth of product. (Service component being important, pride, and self-worth. Anybody could buy and participate.)