

Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support
Healthy Food Shelves Initiative – Kick Off Meeting
March 8, 2012
9:00am - 11:00am

Meeting Notes

Welcome and Introductions: Representatives from 20 Minneapolis food shelves and 7 hunger relief organizations gathered to discuss challenges, opportunities, and current efforts related to increasing the amount of healthy food items available in Minneapolis food shelves. Thank you for those who were able to join us! A complete contact list for Kick Off meeting participants will be sent to everyone as a separate document. If you would like to be added to or removed from the contact list, please email Kristen Klingler (Kristen.Klingler@minneapolismn.gov).

Small Group Discussion, Part 1: Participants discussed current efforts at their food shelves to procure and distribute healthy food items to their clients as well as the main barriers encountered in offering these healthy options. A list of the current efforts and barriers generated is included below (similar items have been grouped together where possible). If you would like to clarify or add any current efforts or barriers to these lists, please email Kristen Klingler (Kristen.Klingler@minneapolismn.gov).

CURRENT EFFORTS TO PURCHASE AND DISTRIBUTE HEALTHY FOODS

- Rescue healthy foods from retailers (get more sweets, but can also secure fresh produce)
 - Whole Foods donations – Lunds/Byerlys
 - Direct from smaller grocers that Second Harvest doesn't "capture"
- Secure healthy food donations from non-retail sources
 - Identify community gardens near food shelf that are interested in donating fresh produce
 - Garden gleaning from Gardening Matters
 - Donations from CSAs
 - Donations from farmers markets
- Provide client education on how to select and prepare healthy food items
 - Include nutritional information in food bags about how to prepare healthy foods
 - Client education on how to use healthy items/products, healthy food choices
 - Offer clients tips, recipes and taste testing opportunities for foods being distributed
 - Play educational videos in waiting area
 - "Cooking made easy" classes with teenagers once a week
- Receive healthy foods from food banks
 - Signed up to receive Emergency Food Shelf Network's culturally specific food baskets
 - Recipient of fresh produce from Second Harvest Heartland
- Food shelves purchase healthy food options; those with meal programs serve healthy food items
 - Purchase low sodium, low or no sugar items
 - Do not purchase sweets
 - Purchase foods made with whole grains
 - Offer daily healthy snacks for children (80-90) – more like a light meal; teenagers help prepare – learn healthy cooking, healthy eating skills

- Provide unlimited produce and fresh vegetables (in addition to 15-20# reg. product) – large volunteer pool sorts it
- Fresh vegetable/fruit give away once a week, open to anyone – no proof of address required
- Food Bank efforts – partnering with local farmers (get left over produce from farmer’s markets, ask farmers to plant extra crops to donate, collect surplus produce crops)
- Host roundtable network meeting – bi-monthly (to identify gaps, trends)
- Offer small quantities of fresh produce
- Reduce waste by composting; use excess food for other programs

BARRIERS TO PURCHASING AND DISTRIBUTING HEALTHY FOODS (in no particular order)

- Lack of infrastructure for fresh/healthy foods at food shelves or in clients homes
 - Transient populations do not have a lot of food storage options, so fresh items are hard to keep
 - Storage at food shelves – lack of freezer, refrigeration, cooling units, etc
 - TEFAP product comes in larger bulk – limited for space from clients and food shelf
 - Refrigeration – lack of food shelf space for it and lack of money to buy it
 - Lack of storage – cooler space
 - Lack of storage for fresh items at food shelf
 - Limited space for food
 - Limited fridge space – cost of monthly operation
 - Food storage
 - Distribution of fresh items can be difficult (getting food out to clients before it spoils)
- Quality/freshness of produce and healthy food items is not good
 - Produce is at the end of its shelf life – need to distribute quickly before it spoils
 - Clients won’t take produce if it is not “fresh” (often produce donations are those that are nearing the end of their freshness/quality)
 - Food bank donations have changed overtime – the quality of donated food has diminished
 - The food that is donated is bad (not high quality, not fresh, not healthy)
 - Outdated food
 - Time-limited fresh food
 - Poor donation quality – need donor education
 - Access to QUALITY product
- Higher cost of healthy/fresh foods
 - High cost of culturally specific food items
 - Cost has gone up to purchase food at food banks
 - Cost of milk, eggs, meat is more expensive than boxed or prepared items
 - Higher cost of healthy food items
 - Getting dairy is difficult (cost-prohibitive)
 - Cost of healthy foods and consistent availability
- Fresh food isn’t consistently available year round
 - Fresh produce isn’t regularly available
 - Challenges with growing season – grocery rescue vs. growers
- Lack of culturally-specific foods to offer clients/lack of client education related to food preparation of unfamiliar items
 - Clients are resistant to trying new foods (i.e. cilantro)
 - Lack of culturally-specific foods to offer clients

- Offering more common food, not sure how to offer “different” foods
- Clients have low food preparation knowledge – need education on healthy cooking
- Need discounted ethnic foods – Asian, Somali, Hispanic/Latino
- Trying to promote the Fare for All program (small fee), but families would prefer to receive free food
- Difficult to find contact info for community gardens near food shelf
- Transportation to food shelves could be a problem for families and individuals that don’t own a car or can’t access public transportation easily
- Food desert has been a generational problem
- Some food shelves aren’t able to get food bank deliveries (because of budget?), so they must pick up the food themselves, which is costly
- Donations are down – both \$ and product donations
- No existing network of food shelves in Minneapolis to share resources and ideas
- Limited staff capacity to do community networking, collecting donations

Small Group Discussion, Part 2: Participants brainstormed solutions to the common barriers to procuring and distributing healthy foods identified above. Participants were then given the opportunity to vote for their top 3-5 favorite ideas/solutions that they would like the group to explore and possibly implement together over the next 18 months. A list of the ideas generated is included below (similar items have been grouped together along with the number of votes for each idea). If you would like to add your vote to any of the ideas on this list, please email Kristen Klingler (Kristen.Klingler@minneapolismn.gov).

IDEAS FOR INCREASING THE AMOUNT OF HEALTHY FOODS AT MINNEAPOLIS FOOD SHELVES

- Develop a system to capture/purchase fresh produce and healthy food items from farmers markets, community gardens and local farms – *12 votes (community gardens themselves received 6 votes)*
- Client Education – *11 votes*
- Donor education and outreach – *4 votes*
- Develop a system for distribution of healthy foods (i.e. a warehouse or aggregating facility) – *3 votes*
- Tailor food options to clients (culturally specific foods) – *3 votes*
- SNAP promotion – *3 votes*
- Staff/volunteer education – *2 votes*
- Work with corporations, organizations to establish workplace gardens and donation system to food shelves – *2 votes*
- Develop a system for food shelves to exchange items with one another
- Secure lower cost produce
- Buy the healthy foods that are available from food banks and other sources
- Improve internal practices (e.g. attractive displays, use psychology to promote healthy foods)
- Availability of education materials in multiple languages
- Increasing SNAP benefits
- Storage – providing more options to store food
- Help food shelves obtain fresh produce that’s not at the end of shelf life
- Neighborhood food shelf
- Facilitate bulk purchasing of healthy items

- Achievement (not sure what this option means, so if it's yours – please clarify)

Meeting Reflection and Wrap-Up: Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support staff will further research the top solutions/ideas and present additional information at the next partner meeting in mid-/late-April. Options for days and times to meet will be sent out to participants in mid-March. If you would be interested in hosting the next partner meeting at your food shelf (and giving a short presentation to the group on your organization's efforts related to healthy food procurement and distribution), please email Kristen Klingler (Kristen.Klingler@minneapolismn.gov).