

Minneapolis Healthy Food Shelf Network

Facilitated by the Minneapolis Health Department

Thursday, September 17, 2015

10:00 – 11:30am

Location: CAPI Food Shelf

Sabathani Community Center – Room D
310 E. 38th St, Minneapolis



Meeting Notes

Announcements and updates

- Reminder to sign up for the health department's ReThink Your Drink, Every Sip Counts! campaign. By registering your food shelf online at www.rethinkyourdrink.minneapolismn.gov, you can receive free printed materials to display in your food shelf to encourage clients to make healthier beverage choices.
- Food Day (a national observance) is coming up on October 24th and this year there will be a focus on encouraging people to donate healthy foods to their local food shelf. Visit www.foodday.org for more information on how you can promote your food shelf locally as part of this day.
- The Metro Food Access Network has formally endorsed a list of Promising Practices for Creating a Nutrition-Focused Food Shelf and Meal Program (a concept that originated within the Minneapolis Healthy Food Shelf Network). They will be posting the final Promising Practices document on their website and we encourage you to also post the document on your own organization's site when it is ready.

Spotlight on CAPI food shelf

- Donggie Hang from CAPI gave an overview of CAPI's Asian-specific food shelf operations which operate out of the Sabathani Community Center. CAPI has implemented a number of Promising Practices including creating a wish list of culturally appropriate and healthy foods that they want to receive from their donors and training food shelf staff to recommend healthy foods to clients. A power point with more information was included with a follow-up email after the meeting.

Presentation on Promising Practices for Creating a Nutrition-Focused Food Shelf: Building a Healthy Inventory

- Kristen Klingler, from the Minneapolis Health Department, gave a presentation on how to build a steady supply of healthy foods in your food shelf inventory. The powerpoint for this topic can be found on the Minneapolis Health Department's website: http://www.minneapolismn.gov/health/living/Healthy_Foods.

- Building a healthy inventory is a critical part of creating a nutrition-focused food shelf. There are many ways to add in healthy options while still meeting clients' needs and preferences. The group reviewed key strategies to consider including creating space to accept healthy bulk buys or donations (including adding cooler space for perishable items); starting an on-site garden to supply fresh produce; and analyzing purchases to identify areas of costs savings that can be applied toward healthy foods. The group also reviewed key strategies for food banks to implement including offering healthier versions of popular items, clearly labeling healthy options on inventory lists, and requesting flexibility from retail rescue partners.
- Key points from the group's discussion included:
 - Food shelves can feel confident in only offering healthy foods (and eliminating unhealthy options) by explaining the economic benefit to clients. When your food shelf focuses on supplying healthy foods like fresh fruits and veggies, whole grains, and lean proteins, your clients don't have to worry about purchasing those items at the store where they're often too expensive or not readily available. Clients can then use their food assistance benefits or discretionary income to purchase other items such as soda, chips, or processed foods, which are very inexpensive and readily available in any community.
 - If your food shelf is not ready to stop offering certain unhealthy foods, try to at least limit the amount of unhealthy items you have on the shelf at a given time, or offer healthier versions of the same food (e.g. wheat bread, low-sugar cereal).
 - If expanding physical space to accommodate more healthy food seems impossible, think about the space that is currently being used by unhealthy items that you could reduce or eliminate. You may not be able to change the total square footage of your food shelf, but you can change how you are utilizing the space and what items get priority on your shelves and in your storage space.
 - In order to encourage clients to take healthy options, try merchandising them with colorful signage, prominent placement, simple recipe cards, and grouping them with other items that can be used to make a healthy meal.
 - Education is key for promoting healthy foods, both with clients and well as staff and volunteers. There are many resources available to help you educate your clients about the benefits of healthy foods, how to prepare healthy meals, and what healthy foods are available to them in the food shelf. Resources also exist to help you train staff/volunteers to help clients make healthy choices.
 - Food banks are very interested in providing the types of items that food shelves want to distribute, but they need to hear feedback from food shelves and observe a demand for healthy items in order to make inventory decisions.
- MHD staff is available to assist food shelves in implementing these strategies. Please contact Kristen (Kristen.Klingler@minneapolismn.gov) for information about technical assistance opportunities or visit the Resources section of our website (<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/health/living/eating/foodshelf>) for helpful resources.