

Promising Practices for Creating Healthy Food Shelves

Minneapolis Healthy Food Shelf Network
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Promising Practices

1. **Build a healthy inventory**
2. Communicate proactively
3. Make healthy foods visible and appealing
4. Increase client awareness and demand
5. Adopt a nutrition-focused philosophy





Promising Practice #1

Build a healthy inventory

Recommended Action Steps

- **Increase food storage capacity** to take advantage of healthy bulk buys or donations
 - Energy efficient cooler space for perishable items
- **Purchase from healthy food outlets**
 - Food banks (*remember to ask them to offer more healthy options*)
 - Local farmers or producers (*negotiate wholesale prices for bulk buys*)
- **Analyze purchasing invoices** to identify items to reduce/eliminate; apply cost savings toward healthier items
 - The Food Group's pancakes vs. oatmeal example



A Healthier Alternative

Assumption: Food shelf serving 25 people per month:

Pancake Syrup + Mix

Budget breakdown:

1 case syrup (12 bottles) = \$11/case

1 case mix (12 boxes) = \$11/case

If each client receives **1 pancake syrup and 1 mix per month:**

Total Annual Cost = ~\$543

Oatmeal + Applesauce

Budget breakdown:

1 case oatmeal (36 tubs) = \$28/case

1 case applesauce (12 cans) = \$7/case

If each client receives **1 tub of oatmeal and 1 can of applesauce per month:**

Total Annual Cost = ~\$408

TOTAL SAVED = \$135



What can you buy with an extra \$135?

Fruits & Veggies

- ✓ **180 bags** of frozen mixed vegetables
- ✓ **274 bags** of fresh carrots
- ✓ **244 cans** of green beans, no added salt
- ✓ **181 cans** pineapple pieces in own juice

Proteins

- ✓ **111 cartons** of eggs
- ✓ **178 cans** of white chicken
- ✓ **257 cans** of canned black or pinto beans
- ✓ **155 (2 pound) bags** of dry pinto beans

Grains

- ✓ **352 boxes** of whole wheat couscous
- ✓ **143 (2 pound) bags** of brown rice

Others/Snacks

- ✓ **96 bottles** of olive oil
- ✓ **265 cans** of chicken noodle soup, ready-to-eat
- ✓ **153 packs (6 per pack)** of trail mix bars



**All figures are calculated using values from The Food Group's ordering list*

Recommended Action Steps

- **Commit to not purchasing any sugary beverages**
 - Free materials from “ReThink Your Drink” campaign
- **Provide your own fresh produce**
 - Garden/farm projects at Brian Coyle, Open Arms, Loaves and Fishes, The Food Group, Waite House, NorthPoint, and Little Kitchen
- **From Promising Practice #2:**
 - Create a healthy wish list for your donors
 - Host a healthy food drive to request expensive items



Recommended Action Steps - Food Banks



- **Limit or eliminate unhealthy options**
 - Nutrient-poor items like soda, candy, cookies, and heavily processed foods (e.g. ramen noodles, hot dogs, skillet dinners)
- **Increase selection of healthy items**
 - Healthy versions of popular or frequently ordered foods (e.g. low-sugar cereal and granola bars, unsweetened applesauce, low-sodium soups)
- **Make healthy foods affordable**
 - Competitive or subsidized pricing for healthy items
- **Clearly label healthy items on inventory lists**
 - Scoring systems (e.g. Go, Slow, Whoa) or nutrition labels (e.g. fat, sugar, sodium content)
- **Ask for flexibility with retail rescue partners**
 - Negotiate to allow food shelves to accept only healthy donations

Available Resources

- Open Your Heart grants for coolers
(www.oyh.org/grant-programs)
- The Food Group's resources
(<http://thefoodgroupmn.org/promote-fresh-produce-toolkit/>)
- Second Harvest's resources
(<http://www.2harvest.org/who--how-we-help/services-and-programs/>)
- MHD assistance in planning or implementing any of the recommended action steps





Taking Action

How are/can you build a healthy inventory in order to increase nutritious food options at your site?