SAFE & HEALTHY
FOOD PANTRIES
PROJECT
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ADVANCING FOOD SAFETY THROUGH BEHAVIOR CHANGE
U.S. Burden of Food Insecurity & Disease

- Food insecure
- Income <$15,000 per year & obese
- Poor & diabetic
Food pantry guest health profiles

Poor health outcomes associated with food insecurity:
- Nutrient deficiencies
- Low birth-weight babies
- Chronic disease

- Chronic stress
- Risk for overweight & obesity

Source: Feeding America, 2014
Risk for foodborne illness is greater for some individuals, sharing some characteristics of food pantry guests

- stress
- pregnancy
- 0-5 or 60-65 years of age
- nutrient deficiency

Source: Lund and Obrien, 2011
Food Pantry Role in Supporting Health

.... supporting health and well-being of guests by working to improve nutritional quality and safety of foods offered at the food pantry.
Project Goal

The goal of the Safe & Healthy Food Pantries Project is to improve access to, and availability of, adequate, appropriate, safe & nutritious food for low-income food pantry guests.

- Food Pantries assess, identify steps
- Food Pantries plan and take action
Research Design

- Survey
  - WISCAP agencies & food pantries: staff & volunteers
  - Food pantries: guests
- Focus group research
- Tool kit development & Pilot testing
GUEST SURVEYS
Pantry Guest Survey

- Delivered at all 6 pantries by county UW-Extension partners
- Survey available in English and Spanish
- Goal: Increase understanding of food selection preferences and foods that pantry guests would like to see available at the food pantry.
- Total responses = 156

Image source: usda.gov
Pantry Guest Survey

Which of the following foods would you like to see more of at the food pantries you visit?

- Other
- None
- Dried or canned beans and peas
- Eggs
- Dairy (Milk, Cheese, Yogurt)
- Snack Foods (Granola, Pretzels, Popcorn)
- Turkey, Fish, Chicken, Peanut Butter
- Cereals, Breads, Pasta, Rice
- Vegetables
- Fruits

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Pantry Guest Survey

Which of the following types of food would you like to see more of at your pantry?

- Fresh fruits and vegetables: 80%
- Whole grains: 60%
- Low Fat/Fat Free: 30%
- Low/Reduced Sodium: 20%
- Other: 10%
- None: 0%
Pantry Guest Survey

What are the most helpful supplemental resources at your food pantry?

- Other
- Job training/support
- Clothing
- Referral to other food resources or food assistance
- Nutrition education
- Community Meal
- Recipes
FOCUS GROUPS
Focus Group Research

• 10 focus groups
  – 4 with food pantry staff and volunteers
  – 6 with food pantry guests
• 83 total participants
• Food pantries recruited guests to participate
• Extension specialists facilitated
Focus Group Themes

– **Pantry operations**: waiting on site; selection experience; layout

– **Food availability at the pantry**: quantity vs. quantity

– **Attitudes, preferences, and beliefs**: towards donors, guests and the pantry

– **Guest food and coping behaviors**: nutrition needs and preferences; coping with limited food budget

– **Food safety**: product dating, storage, repackaging
Focus Group Quotes

“Oh yes [it would be easier to make healthier choices if they were placed at the beginning] cuz if you used up your points and it’s at the end you use up your points before getting to the [healthy] food.”

“For me to have to go to a food pantry its degrading enough. I don't need somebody there looking down on me like here, just take this, take this. “

“Separate out the healthier low sodium stuff since we have such a short time to make a decision.”

Pantry operations theme
Focus Group Quotes

“I would love to be able to do more [nutritionally] but quite honestly right now I need to create meals that will fill them up.”

“I don’t know how to use the foods I get.”

“I [select] what my family likes”

Food availability theme
Focus Group Quotes

Towards donors
"...the attitude for people donating foods, like stores and everything; they look at the label or expiration date. Say oh this is going to expire next week. Let's get everything, whatever, and give it to the pantry. Sometimes I feel like, throwing food to a dog. You know what I mean? Let's just get it out of the store. They will eat it. They need food. It's the type of attitude. More (now) than what the pantry had when it started."

Towards (other) clients
“I don't use the pantry that much because I feel like there are people who need it more than me. “

Towards pantry
“Very grateful”

Attitudes theme
Focus Group Quotes

“I'm very thankful for the food, don't get me wrong, but the way they separate the things like you'll get a plastic bag of chicken ... they must get it in bulk.. At first I was like oh no, no way, ... I'm gonna get sick off this. But then I guess I just kind of thought, well, they have a lot of people to help.”

*Food safety theme*
### Program Theory: Socio-Ecological Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Layer</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Federal Food Programs: TEFAP Purchasing Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Community: donations to food bank/pantry &amp; support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Food bank and pantry: purchasing, donation, distribution guidelines &amp; policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Pantry volunteer &amp; coordinator support: inventory match to Dietary Guidelines &amp; adhering to food safety or nutrition policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Individual food selections at pantry: nutrition education, healthy recipes, pantry guidelines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4 Steps:

The Safe & Healthy Food Pantries Project
Step 1: Assessment

• Current practices and policies
• Guest surveys or interviews
  Food preferences
  Food safety concerns
• Inventory Assessment

See: http://fyi.uwex.edu/safehealthypantries/
Step 2: Strategies
Pantry Guests Choose Healthy Foods

- Partner with Nutrition Educators
- Make the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice
- Nudges Activity
- Support Clients While Shopping
- Offer Recipes
Have you ever tried zucchini before? If so, what did you think?

How was it prepared?

Show them a real zucchini. You can ask, “Did you know that zucchini can be green or yellow?” Share that it is a vegetable, high in necessary nutrients, easy to incorporate with other foods people are used to eating, and that it is available at the food pantry today for them to take home and try or use for free.

Introduce the produce card—point out the links that can be typed in or the QR codes can be scanned taking them to two different short videos on how they can cook zucchini.

If you have a smartphone or tablet ask if you can watch the video together—emphasize that it is only 3 minutes long. Ask them which video they would like to watch, the video for sautéing the zucchini (the top one) or the zucchini fries (the bottom one). If they have their own smartphone, ask them if they have a bar code scanning app or if they'd like help with downloading a free app.
Protein

Proteína

Vegetables

Vegetales
ADD RAISINS TO OATMEAL!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat and Beans (PB, EG)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy (Yo and C)</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grains</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meal Makers (Soups, Meals in a Box)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc. (Oils, snacks &amp; sweets, condiments, staples)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Items</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recipe for:

ORZO

(Rice Shaped Pasta)
Step 3: Action Plan
Accepting and distributing safe food.

- Donor education
- Guidelines for donations
- Keep or toss poster
Step 4: Implementation

Toolkit and project resources: http://fyi.uwex.edu/safehealthypantries/
Is the pantry ready for change?

Trans-Theoretical Model of Change
Empowering Food Pantries

- Establish shared values
- Build rapport
- Be knowledgeable
- Have realistic expectations
  - Engagement
  - Physical readiness & capacity
- Ask powerful questions
Engaging Pantries in the Safe & Healthy Food Pantries Project