



Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: December 7th, 2015

Present: Anna Adachi-Mejia (Health Promotion Research Center at Dartmouth), Erika Argersinger (New Hampshire Kids Count), Donna Bister (Vermont Department of Health), Trudi Brock (Sharon Food Shelf), Amanda Charland (Coop Food Stores), Kristen Coats (Upper Valley HEAL), Carolyn Cusick (Friends of Mascoma Foundation), Sarah Danly (Center for Agriculture and Food Systems, Vermont Law School), Rachel DiStefano (ReThink Health: UCRV / Randolph Area Food Shelf), Alice Ely (Public Health Council of the Upper Valley / Mascoma Valley Health Initiative), Kelly French (The Family Place Parent Child Center), Cathy Hazlett (Health Connections of the Upper Valley), Sharon Irwin (NOFA Farm to Community Mentor), Stephanie Kelly (Health Promotion Research Center at Dartmouth), Deborah Kennedy (Build Healthy Kids), Filomena Kersey (Children’s Hospital at Dartmouth Hitchcock), Vickie MacFarlane (LISTEN), Casey Murray (Granite United Way), Rob Nahabedian (King Arthur Flour), Beth Rosenberger (Dartmouth College Dining Services), Beth Roy (Vital Communities), Nancy Russell (Babble On Day Care / Rotary of the Upper Valley), John Tunncliffe (King Arthur Flour), Wendy Walsh (Vermont Department of Health, White River Junction District Office), Susan Wnuk (CAP Belknap-Merrimack)

Co-Chairs: Margaret Brown (Dartmouth-Hitchcock Community Health) and Gabe Zoerheide (Willing Hands)

Hunger Free Vermont Staff: Faye Conte and Jenna Banning

<u>Welcome and Introductions:</u>	<u>Action Steps & Handouts:</u>
<p><i>Margaret Brown started the meeting and introduced Gabe Zoerheide, who will be working alongside her as co-chair of the Hunger Council. Attendees then introduced themselves and gave updates on anti-hunger initiatives they are working on.</i></p> <p><i>Erika Argersinger – New Hampshire Kids Count is part of an anti-hunger coalition that put together a statewide strategic plan. The coalition will be revisiting and reassessing the plan in the coming year.</i></p> <p><i>Carolyn Cusick – The Friends of Mascoma Foundation was formed to support and enhance the Mascoma School District. They are working on several initiatives, including addressing food insecurity in the school district. When the new school’s renovations are complete, it will have a food pantry in the school.</i></p> <p><i>Sarah Danly – The Vermont Law School’s Center for Agriculture and Food Systems is working on several anti-hunger issues from the legal perspective.</i></p> <p><i>Trudi Brock – The Sharon Food Shelf is helping build a food back pack program in Sharon.</i></p> <p><i>Alice Ely – The Public Health Council is happy to be part of this group and looking to partner with the community to address food insecurity.</i></p> <p><i>Rob Nahabedian – Rob is new to the Council and to his role in the HR Department at King Arthur Flour, where he focuses on supporting volunteers and philanthropy.</i></p> <p><i>Wendy Walsh – The Vermont Department of Education and Superintendents’ Association is working on building comprehensive wellness policies at schools. Some school districts and supervisory unions, including Springfield SU and Windsor Northwest SU, received grants</i></p>	

<p>to help change to this new model, and school health liaisons, including Wendy, are working with schools to help make this happen.</p>	
<p><u>Legislative Updates:</u></p> <p><i>Erika Argersinger</i> – The New Hampshire legislative session starts in January. At the moment, legislators are submitting Legislative Service Requests (LSR), which are titles of bills that they would like to propose in the coming year. Based on the titles, Erika identified a few interesting / challenging potential bills that she and others will be keeping an eye on, including one to disqualify certain groups from public assistance, one that would restrict the use of food stamps in convenience stores, one recommending drug testing of public benefits recipients, and one that would require photo ID for food stamp recipients.</p> <p><i>Faye Conte</i> – Faye gave a quick update on Child Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR), which has been sitting for the past few months. Hunger Free Vermont found out recently that CNR may be passed this week (by December 11th) before Congress adjourns, and is working with their partners in DC to find out what’s in the bill. It is likely that CNR will be rolled into the omnibus budget bill, in which case, there will be no chance for discussion or to make changes. Senator Leahy from Vermont sits on the Senate Agriculture Committee that is looking at this bill, and Hunger Free Vermont is working with his office to ensure our priorities are included in the bill.</p> <p>At the Vermont state level, the legislative session also begins in January. Hunger Free Vermont is part of the Pathways from Poverty Council, a governor-appointed advisory group that makes realistic recommendations to tackle poverty to the Governor. Faye shared the executive summary of the Report to Governor Shumlin (see attached), and highlighted number 4, which supports capital investments to the Agency of Human Service’s IT system. The IT system was identified as a crisis problem in 1997, and is holding back improvements to social services in the state. Hunger Free Vermont is helping to lead advocacy efforts on this issue.</p> <p>Faye also shared postcards from the Vermont Afterschool Coalition, which is looking to increase funding for high quality afterschool programming. Faye asked Vermont residents to sign the postcards to show support for afterschool programs – these cards will be shared with legislators in January.</p>	<p><u>Handout:</u> Report to Governor Shumlin from the Pathways from Poverty Council</p> <p><u>Action:</u> Sign on to support funding for afterschool programming in Vermont at http://www.vermontafterschool.org/zapthegap/</p>
<p><u>WIC: Program Overview, Updates, & Discussion</u></p> <p><i>The Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is transitioning to an electronic benefits system in Vermont and will be undergoing a similar transition in New Hampshire by 2017. Donna Bister, who oversees the WIC program for the state of Vermont, and Susan Wnuk, who oversees WIC in Belknap, Coos, Grafton, and Merrimack Counties, presented an overview of the program’s development, the nutritional supports it offers participants, how the “food package” is determined for families, and how the delivery system will be changing.</i></p> <p><i>Donna Bister</i> - WIC was created 41 years ago, and is a holistic nutritional support program that provides nutrition services (including referrals and counseling), breastfeeding support, as well as food provisions. Eligibility is based on residence, category (if an</p>	

<p>individual is pregnant or postpartum, an infant, or a child up to five years old), income guidelines (185% of poverty, with some flexibility through adjunct eligibility), and if the individual is “at risk” (which can be broadly defined).</p> <p>WIC provides foods that are prescribed for each individual based on category and risk. Foods are prescribed in consultation with the participant on a monthly basis, and each “food package” is very specific on amounts and type of food, with some flexibility within subcategories. If an individual has special needs (i.e. gluten-intolerant, lactose intolerant), physicians can notify the WIC office to prescribe foods that meet those needs.</p> <p>WIC has been home delivered in Vermont for 40 years (since the program started). All WIC programs must transition to an electronic benefits system by 2020, and Vermont decided to start the transition early. Five of the 12 local WIC offices have already transitioned to eWIC, and the rest will transition before May 2016. Families will be coming to their local office to pick up their card and decide what package will be loaded onto it electronically and reloaded every 3 months. WIC keeps a list of all UPC codes for foods that WIC covers, and will have a mobile app available for families to easily determine at the store what they can purchase.</p> <p><i>The Council discussed some of the benefits and challenges of going to the eWIC system. Clients were surveyed, and while some expressed concerns about transportation challenges of getting to a store that carries WIC benefits, Donna feels that there will be enough stores across the state that accessibility will not be a problem. Donna passed around an example of the new eWIC card, which was decided on by WIC participants.</i></p> <p><i>Susan Wnuk – In New Hampshire, the WIC program is administered by 3 CAP agencies and 1 community health center, and has both permanent office sites and mobile office sites. In Susan’s coverage region, 24% of WIC recipients are women, 26% are infants, and 51% are children up to the age of 5 – this is a common caseload across the country. New Hampshire uses a voucher system currently, and is planning to transition to eWIC by early 2017. The WIC Food Package and its nutrient guidelines are established by the Institute of Medicine, with strong support from the American Academy of Pediatrics and other national organizations. The Food Package is currently under review by the Institute of Medicine, which will be evaluating the current foods covered by WIC and recommend changes.</i></p> <p><i>Both Donna and Susan discussed WIC’s priority of supporting breastfeeding. WIC offices offer support services, including Peer to Peer counseling in some locations. The WIC program is also advocating for increasing the number of hospitals certified as Baby Friendly Hospitals.</i></p> <p><i>Anna Adachi-Mejia then shared her personal story of learning to breastfeed two of her children, and encouraged greater educational resources for women who wish to breastfeed, including the supports offered by WIC. All three presenters agreed that it is important to provide accurate and nonjudgmental information so that mothers can decide if they want to breastfeed, and that it is important to provide support for women who are breastfeeding.</i></p>	<p>Handouts: <i>Susan Wnuk’s powerpoint (attached)</i> <i>New Hampshire WIC Nutrition Program flyer (attached)</i> <i>New Hampshire Commodity Supplemental Food Program (attached)</i></p>
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<p>Mapping Anti-Hunger Initiatives and Organizations:</p> <p><i>In spring 2015, a “Food Roundtable” met and discussed how to identify existing resources and fill potential gaps. Anna Adachi-Mejia and Cathy Hazlett shared an overview of that meeting, which eventually led to the creation of this Hunger Council, and Beth Roy helped share updates on the information that has been collected and potential next steps.</i></p> <p><i>The Food Roundtable group identified a list of gaps in the region, including cooking education, access to food sources, and adequate cooking facilities. This list was shared with the Council, who made suggestions to fill some of those gaps as well as other areas that could be explored.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filomena Kersey works with a number of dieticians, including one who is a chef, and recommending tapping into this network for cooking and nutrition education. • Amanda Charland offered the use of the Coop’s instructional facility and connection with the Coop’s registered dietician – contact Amanda at acharland@coopfoodstore.com . <p><i>Beth and Vital Communities maintains an online guide of farms across the area. They will next have schools enter information on their farm to school activities, and after that, will be entering service providers, with the goal of creating an online searchable guide for the area. The Council offered a number of suggestions and questions for this guide, and Beth stated that Vital Communities will continue to keep the Council updated and seek feedback as the guide develops.</i></p> <p><i>Council members suggested other areas to investigate, including the food rescue system, food pantries and food shelves, and school gardening and cooking. Margaret asked Council members to think on what areas or systems they would like to learn more about, and bring ideas for initiatives to the next meeting.</i></p>	<p><u>Handout:</u> Upper Valley Food Education and Healthy Food Access Contact List (attached)</p> <p><u>Action:</u> Review Contact List (attached) and send additional names or changes to Beth Roy at beth@vitalcommunities.org .</p>
<p>Announcements & Wrap-up</p> <p>Alice Ely has a Dartmouth College fellow working full time with her over the next semester who could be used as a research resource. Alice also shared that the Healthy New Hampshire Foundation just put out a RFP, looking to fund projects on food insecurity. Carolyn Cusick shared that the Friends of Mascoma is working to create a mobile food summer program, and has already purchased a trailer. Carolyn is looking for information on others doing a similar program.</p>	<p><u>Action:</u> Contact Jenna at jbanning@hungerfreevt.org with any suggestions for future topics or Council members.</p>
<p>Meeting Adjourned</p>	

Save the Dates for our Upcoming Meetings:

- Monday, February 22nd, 3:00 – 5:00 at Kilton Library
- Monday, February 29th, 3:00 – 5:00 at Kilton Library (Snow Date)
- Monday, April 18th, 3:00 – 5:00 at Kilton Library