Food for Tomorrow

A TRI-COUNTY FOOD INITIATIVE
Serving Fond du Lac, Manitowoc and Sheboygan Counties
Final Report

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Hunger is isolating; it may not and cannot be experienced vicariously. He who never felt hunger can never know its real effects, both tangible and intangible. Hunger defies imagination; it even defies memory. Hunger is felt only in the present.

--Elie Wiesel
**Executive Summary**

Hunger and food insecurity are *real* problems for Sheboygan County and Wisconsin families. Statewide, approximately 560,000 people live in households that are food insecure; that is, they do not have access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. One out of every 11 Wisconsin households or approximately 3,400 households in Fond du Lac County, 3,000 Manitowoc County and 4,000 households in Sheboygan County are food insecure. Low-income, working families have alarmingly high rates of food insecurity (44%) and hunger (19%). So what is the face of hunger? What can be done to help low income, working families become more food secure?

During the last quarter of 2009, a meeting of representatives from Fond du Lac, Manitowoc and Sheboygan counties was convened to discuss interest in collaborating on a Tri-County Clearinghouse. The assumption entering into this study process was that “under the auspices of the Sheboygan County Food Bank, a Regional Food Clearinghouse (Clearinghouse) could be established within one of the three counties. Once a Clearinghouse is operational, it would be able to accept large donations from local and regional companies that process food and nonfood products, serve as a purchasing agent for food and non-food products, store food that requires refrigeration or freezing, ensure food security, distribute food and commodities to the food pantries, conduct coordinated fund raising and marketing and regularly evaluate and assess the needs of the system. Once fully established, a Clearinghouse would also be able to work with local gardening clubs, farmer’s markets and farmers as well as with restaurants and hotels in expanding food supplies and options”.

Regional Food Clearinghouse Feasibility Proposal January 2010

This final report includes information on some of the data collected through surveys and interviews. Portions of the report include information related to local, regional, state and national research. Based on the information gathered, the recommendations in this final report are to address hunger/food security issues initially not through a physical plant (Clearinghouse) and instead implement a comprehensive strategy. This comprehensive strategy will build on existing resources and organizations and foster capacity for improved integration and collaboration to support and expand the food delivery systems in the tri-county area. The plan proposes building blocks that will begin to address availability, accessibility, adequacy and dependability of the food supply within the broader context of economic security.

Much as the food pyramid recommends a daily diet including grains, vegetables, fruits, milk, oil, meat and beans coupled with daily exercise/activity, this final plan recommends:

- implementing a food security methodology including an ongoing food assessment process,
- engaging, educating and mobilizing a broad network of individuals and organizations to improve access to healthy (preferably locally produced/grown) foods,
- developing and instituting consistent operational practices of accountability for the distribution of food resources, procedures to promote community services and to remove barriers for those seeking food resources,
- developing food resources for rural areas and other populations unable to access existing resources,
- working with schools and other child serving organizations to implement programs including access to healthy food choices, and;
- strengthening links between existing food system groups and providing a point person to assist with programs, projects, policies and partnerships for a sustainable food system not only for today but also for tomorrow.
Background

During 2008 and 2009, the Sheboygan and Plymouth Area United Way staff in collaboration with numerous community partners led and participated in a number of meetings, planning sessions and initiatives that identified a number of issues facing individuals and families throughout Sheboygan County including access to food. These included but were not limited to:

- In January of 2009, a community collaborative called the “As One Unemployment Task Force” (As One) was organized to proactively address the needs of the unemployed and underemployed in Sheboygan County. A spin off of the primary activities of As One was a proposal for ‘Food for Tomorrow’. This proposal was to implement and operate a food center with a proposed budget of just under $200,000. The goal was to develop a sustainable, efficient food distribution system for Sheboygan County Food Pantries to support the vision of providing ample food for all individuals in need throughout Sheboygan County. The mission at that time was to maximize and efficiently use the resources of the community by providing a central clearinghouse for distribution of food to Sheboygan County food pantries.

- The Sheboygan and Plymouth Area United Way 2008-2011 Strategic Directions Plan included a number of core strategies, some of them were:
  - Develop innovative strategies that generate resources and respond to the changes in the business climate, work force, population demographics and potential for resource development outside the county.
  - Initiate or participate in collaborative relationships with the public and private sectors both locally and regionally that improve coordination of resources and more effectively provide targeted services.

- The Sheboygan and Plymouth Area United Way has identified the following essential needs:
  - Helping children/youth.
  - Strengthening families and individuals.
  - Providing for elderly.
  - Assisting special needs individuals.
  - Meeting basic needs of food and shelter.
  - Providing program information/educating the community on available resources.
  - Conducting outreach.
  - Providing financial stability through housing assistance and budget counseling.
A Silver Lake College Resource Development Plan for the Sheboygan County Food Bank identified the following needs:

- Develop relationships with businesses in Sheboygan County.
- Develop resources to work on enhancing corporate and public knowledge of the Sheboygan County Food Bank.
- Create a contact list of potential businesses and organizations that may be in a position to provide assistance.
- Establish a volunteer network.
- Coordinate the logistics of food delivery.

The Silver Lake report summary stated, “The impact of non-implementation of this plan is to sacrifice the needs of the underserved population. We believe the Sheboygan County Food Bank/Pantry needs to partner with community organizations, such as the SCIO and United Way. These organizations have the ability, skill and resources to make this happen.”

During the last quarter of 2009, Bill Weissert, CFRE and Executive Director of the Sheboygan and Plymouth Area United Way, convened a meeting of representatives from Fond du Lac, Manitowoc and Sheboygan counties to discuss interest in collaborating on a Tri County Food Clearinghouse. The representatives from these three counties reached consensus that:

- People are in need of food.
- Food supplies from local sources are available.
- The system can be improved to get the food to the people.

Sheboygan County along with our contiguous counties is facing a critical need to support low income and working individuals and families in meeting their basic needs for food, housing, medical care, employment and transportation with the recognition that economic changes require new thinking and creative approaches to tackling the human problems we see in our communities. It was obvious that just providing food distribution in the manner it has been done in the past does not address the needs we see before us. As Mr. Weissert stated, “We are at the early stages of defining the scope of the problem and designing a solution. We are now at the jumping off point where we need to compile the research, develop the marketing approaches and write a business plan of how such an endeavor would provide quality service to individuals and families in need and in addition be financially stable. The grant we are asking for would give us the financial resources to conduct these studies in detail and develop a comprehensive marketing and business plan so that a Regional Food Clearinghouse will have an opportunity for success. As with any organizational endeavor, the proper preparation and planning included in our proposal to you will be essential in making sure that the project is sustainable.”
Each county brings uniqueness to the table as well as similarities. The following charts provide an overview of the information on the overall populations, demographics and unemployment. The following chart provides a summary of census quick facts for the three counties.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fond du Lac County</th>
<th>Manitowoc County</th>
<th>Sheboygan County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population Estimate 2009</strong></td>
<td>100,070</td>
<td>80,583</td>
<td>114,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population, percent change, April 2000 to July 2009</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>-2.8%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Estimates base (April 1) 2000</td>
<td>97,296</td>
<td>82,893</td>
<td>112,656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons under 5 years old, percent, 2009</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons under 18 years old, percent, 2009</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person 65 years old and over, percent, 2009</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White persons, percent, 2009</td>
<td>96.2%</td>
<td>95.5%</td>
<td>92.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black persons, percent, 2009</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian &amp; Alaskan Native persons, 2009</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian persons, percent, 2009</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons reporting 2 or more races, percent, 2009</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons of Hispanic/Latino origin, percent, 2009</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White persons not Hispanic, percent, 2009</td>
<td>92.7%</td>
<td>93.0%</td>
<td>87.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Households, 2000</strong></td>
<td>36,931</td>
<td>32,721</td>
<td>43,545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons per household, 2000</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median household income, 2008</td>
<td>$53,499</td>
<td>$50,150</td>
<td>$52,587</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Quick Facts from the US Census Bureau
Poverty in 2009 per the U.S. Census Bureau has increased as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Fond du Lac</th>
<th>Manitowoc</th>
<th>Sheboygan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau 2009

The increase in poverty from 2008 to 2009 ranged from 1.4% in Fond du Lac County, .5% in Manitowoc County to 1.6% in Sheboygan County.

Children living in poverty data available from 2007 and reported in 2010 for all children under 18 years of age:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Fond du Lac</th>
<th>Manitowoc</th>
<th>Sheboygan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: County Health Ratings – Children in Poverty

Free and reduced school lunch program data by county are available for the 2009-10 school year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Fond du Lac</th>
<th>Manitowoc</th>
<th>Sheboygan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Wisconsin Council on Children & Families from Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction – These are county figures, individual school district numbers may vary from the county average.

The Federal Poverty Level (FPL) has remained unchanged from 2009 and will be used for 2011 until the guidelines are updated. Benefit levels for many low-income assistance programs are based on these guidelines. Below is the 2010 FPL chart. It is based on family size and gross monthly income. Pregnant women count as two people for the purpose of this chart. Source Foundation for Health Coverage Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Size</th>
<th>25%</th>
<th>50%</th>
<th>75%</th>
<th>81%</th>
<th>100%</th>
<th>133%</th>
<th>175%</th>
<th>200%</th>
<th>250%</th>
<th>300%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$226</td>
<td>$451</td>
<td>$677</td>
<td>$731</td>
<td>$903</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
<td>$1,579</td>
<td>$1,805</td>
<td>$2,256</td>
<td>$2,708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$304</td>
<td>$607</td>
<td>$911</td>
<td>$983</td>
<td>$1,214</td>
<td>$1,615</td>
<td>$2,125</td>
<td>$2,428</td>
<td>$3,035</td>
<td>$3,643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$381</td>
<td>$763</td>
<td>$1,144</td>
<td>$1,236</td>
<td>$1,526</td>
<td>$2,029</td>
<td>$2,670</td>
<td>$3,052</td>
<td>$3,815</td>
<td>$4,578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$459</td>
<td>$919</td>
<td>$1,378</td>
<td>$1,488</td>
<td>$1,838</td>
<td>$2,444</td>
<td>$3,216</td>
<td>$3,675</td>
<td>$4,594</td>
<td>$5,513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>$537</td>
<td>$1,075</td>
<td>$1,612</td>
<td>$1,741</td>
<td>$2,149</td>
<td>$2,858</td>
<td>$3,761</td>
<td>$4,298</td>
<td>$5,373</td>
<td>$6,448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>$615</td>
<td>$1,230</td>
<td>$1,846</td>
<td>$1,993</td>
<td>$2,461</td>
<td>$3,273</td>
<td>$4,306</td>
<td>$4,922</td>
<td>$6,152</td>
<td>$7,383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>$693</td>
<td>$1,386</td>
<td>$2,079</td>
<td>$2,246</td>
<td>$2,773</td>
<td>$3,687</td>
<td>$4,852</td>
<td>$5,545</td>
<td>$6,931</td>
<td>$8,318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>$771</td>
<td>$1,542</td>
<td>$2,313</td>
<td>$2,498</td>
<td>$3,084</td>
<td>$4,102</td>
<td>$5,397</td>
<td>$6,168</td>
<td>$7,710</td>
<td>$9,253</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unemployment continues to be a challenge in the three counties as shown in the following table for the counties and major city in each county.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Rank for Aug. 10</th>
<th>Rank for July 10</th>
<th>Rate for Aug. 10</th>
<th>Rate for July 10</th>
<th>Rate for Aug. 09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fond du Lac</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitowoc</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheboygan</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Rank for Aug. 10</th>
<th>Rank for July 10</th>
<th>Rate for Aug. 10</th>
<th>Rate for July 10</th>
<th>Rate for Aug. 09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fond du Lac</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitowoc</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheboygan</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Bureau of Workforce Training
Note: Based on a total of 72 counties and 31 cities

FoodShare Wisconsin was created to help stop hunger and to improve nutrition and health. FoodShare helps people with limited money buy the food they need for good health. Each month, people across Wisconsin get help from FoodShare. They are people of all ages who have a job but have low incomes, are living on small or fixed income, have lost their job, retired or are disabled and not able to work. The following table shows the number of FoodShare recipients by county and benefit payments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Fond du Lac</th>
<th>Manitowoc</th>
<th>Sheboygan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FoodShare Recipients</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2009</td>
<td>8,031</td>
<td>6,286</td>
<td>10,794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2010</td>
<td>8,787</td>
<td>7,123</td>
<td>12,012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase 2009 to 2010</td>
<td>756</td>
<td>837</td>
<td>1,218</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **FoodShare Benefit Payments** |             |            |           |
| October 2009          | $848,948    | $617,613   | $1,130,828|
| October 2010          | $916,361    | $690,578   | $1,265,549|
| Increase 2009 to 2010 | $67,413     | $73,695    | $134,721  |

Source: Wisconsin Department of Health Services

Although unemployment decreased from August of 2009 to August of 2010, individuals and families receiving Food Share and other assistance programs continue to increase. As these individuals and families begin to deal with the realities of unemployment and underemployment, they are seeking new ways to manage with fewer resources.
Project Review

The Sheboygan and Plymouth United Way received an anonymous donation in response to Mr. Weissert’s request to conduct a study and develop a plan. A part time limited term Project Manager was hired to work on this food initiative and a community health center project.

Work on the Food Initiative Project began in March 2010 and quarterly reports were provided for January – March 2010 and April – June 2010. The following is a summary of the activities that were outlined in those quarterly reports:

- Development of a survey instrument and survey process of the existing food pantries to obtain a better understanding of their operational procedures, staffing levels both paid and volunteer, supply sources both purchased and donated, amount of food distributed each month, number of individuals/families served each month and self identification of the strengths and the needs of their pantry/organization.
- Compilation of a list of current and potential suppliers of food products including meat, cheese, canned goods, produce, dairy and breads and suppliers of non-food essential basic needs items including toilet paper, laundry detergent, personal hygiene products, etc.
- Developing a better understanding of The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP Program better known as the “Commodities Program”) that is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services through regional Community Action Program agencies and local food banks.
- Meetings with food providers (pantries, residential programs, shelters and meal programs) in Manitowoc and Fond du Lac counties and the Sheboygan County Food Bank Board.
- A major undertaking, during the first quarter, was working with the Sheboygan County Food Bank and the Roundy’s Corporation on their donation of equipment from the North 25th Street - Sheboygan Pick ‘n Save store. Roundy’s offered the Sheboygan County Food Bank equipment ranging from shelving to large walk-in coolers. In order to accept this offer, the Sheboygan and Plymouth Area United Way, Sheboygan County Interfaith, Family Service Association and the Salvation Army provided assistance to the Sheboygan County Food Bank to:
  - Locate volunteers to remove the equipment;
  - Locate long term storage options for the equipment;
  - Obtain technical assistance in removal of the larger refrigeration/cooler units; and
  - Locate equipment, pallets and other resources needed to move and store the equipment.
- Contacting other United Ways regarding similar food related projects/initiatives in their counties/areas (St. Croix Valley, Marathon and Oshkosh).
- Working with a realtor to identify and visit potential physical plant sites.
- Identifying potential donated physical plant sites.
- Meeting with City of Sheboygan Planning and Development staff.
- Onsite visits to pantries in Sheboygan and Manitowoc counties to observe the food distribution process, discuss the strengths and needs of their organizations, learn more about their food supply/suppliers and speak with both the pantry volunteers and consumers.
- Attending quarterly meetings of food pantries/food resources in Manitowoc and Fond du Lac counties and meetings of the Sheboygan County Food Bank.
- Piloting the food supplier survey and developing potential food donation resources.
- Developing a process to store donated food, if necessary, at a Sheboygan storage facility.
- Meeting with staff of and touring the Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin and Hunger Task Force facilities in Milwaukee to learn more about these larger food bank organizations including
organizational structures, staffing levels, best practices and begin conversations about working cooperatively within a larger structure.

- Meeting with other food related programs including NOURISH to understand their organizational mission and goals and initiate discussion on potential collaborations.
- Coordinating with the Sheboygan County Fair Animal Meat Sale Association.
- Coordinating volunteer requests.
- Assisting the Sheboygan and Plymouth Area United Way with the 2011 campaign as it relates to the Food Initiative and Community Health Center projects.

Information and data as well as antidotal information was compiled to develop a better understanding of the strengths and challenges within the food system with a focus on the entities in the system that provide food (food pantries, meal programs, soup kitchens, residential programs, nutrition programs, etc.) to those in need.

The following is a synopsis of some of the information gathered from food pantries:

**Fond du Lac** – Research was conducted in partnership with the Fond du Lac Area United Way and the UW Extension Cooperative Extension.

- Total of 16 pantries, with four of the pantries located in Green Lake County and one in Dodge County.
- Four of the 16 pantries are The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), formerly commodities, sites serving the communities of Ripon, Green Lake, Lomira and Fond du Lac.
- There are a number of meal sites that provide food ranging from carry out meals to serving a hot meal and providing some groceries.
- Fond du Lac food provider meetings hosted by the UW Extension are held quarterly and include representatives of the pantries, meal programs, ADVOCAP (Community Action Program Agency), WIC (Women, Infant and Children’s Program), residential programs (e.g. Beacon House, United Way and the UW Extension Family Living and Wisconsin Nutrition Program).

**Manitowoc** – Research was conducted in partnership with the Manitowoc Area United Way and the UW Extension Cooperative Extension.

- Total of 10 pantries, all in Manitowoc County.
- Three of the 10 pantries are The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), formerly commodities, sites serving the communities Maribel, Manitowoc and Two Rivers.
- There are a number of meal sites that provide a hot meal.
- Manitowoc food provider meetings are hosted by the UW Extension Family Living Program and include representatives of the pantries, health department, farmer’s market, United Way, farming community and the UW Extension Family Living and Wisconsin Nutrition Program.

**Sheboygan** – Research was conducted in partnership with the Sheboygan County Food Bank and the Sheboygan and Plymouth Area United Way.

- Total of 11 pantries, all in Sheboygan County.
- Three of the 11 pantries are The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), formerly commodities, sites serving the communities of Sheboygan (2) and Random Lake/Adell.
- There are a number of meal sites that provide hot meals, a site that provides baked goods and a site that provides a brown bag lunch for the homeless.
• The Sheboygan County Food Bank Board meets quarterly and includes representatives from the following food pantries: Salvation Army Pantry – Sheboygan, Random Lake, St. Mark’s, Plymouth, St. Peter Claver, Northside Christian, Sheboygan, St. Luke’s and Sheboygan Falls and Lakeshore Community Action Program and the Sheboygan and Plymouth Area United Way.

Operationally, data collected from all three counties through a survey process illustrates:

• The annual budgets for pantries range from $0 to $287,000.
• Pantries track participation in a variety of ways ranging from families, households or individuals to bags, boxes or pounds of food.
• The pantries that track individuals served provided food in a range from 4 individuals per month to 1,200 individuals per month.
• Overall, 66% of the pantries completing the survey are charitable organizations and are tax exempt under 501 (c) (3). The remaining pantries are part of a parent or sponsoring organization, usually a church.
• All pantries reported a significant volunteer workforce. Volunteers manage and staff most of the pantries. About 30% of pantries reporting have some paid staff time designated to the pantry.
• The majority of pantries have some type of eligibility criteria for receiving food ranging from a residency requirement to income eligibility.
• Hours of operation vary from one day per month for 2 hours that day to one full week per month for three hours per day to five days per week with varying hours.
• About 57% of the pantries have policies and procedures.

The survey asked each pantry respondent to identify their three top strengths and their three top needs. The following is a summary of the responses.

**Top Three Strengths**

- Reliable, stable, willing; volunteers
- Community help and support
- Willing to serve all people and volunteers treat clients with dignity and respect

**Top Three Needs**

- Space
- Lack of or limited refrigeration/freezer
- Keep money and donations flowing throughout the year, many cited the need for dairy, fruit, vegetables, cereal and other essentials such as paper products

Included in the survey were two questions regarding food acquisition. Almost all the pantries rely on the same donation sources: churches, Boy Scout and Letter Carrier food drives, private citizens and businesses. Some have special arrangements with local clubs/organizations, are the recipient of special event proceeds or food drives or receive grants. Many pantries purchase food. Purchases are through a local grocery store, outlet store, poultry farms or Feeding America of Eastern Wisconsin. Pantries are resourceful in developing relationships that provide them the means to purchase foods at a lower cost from some larger food producers or receive food donations specific to their pantry.

Pantry hours and days of operation were summarized on an outlook calendar to provide a visual of the consumer’s access to food pantry services by county. Monthly access also needs to be understood in context of other consumer service eligibility requirements including residency, financial and/or referral from an approved agency/organization. The calendars are attached to this final plan.
Nationally and regionally (most recently Green Bay) a number of studies and surveys have been conducted regarding individuals and families using food pantries. The following is a high level summary of some of the data collected in Brown County, which is similar to information collected through other national survey sources:

- Pantry users are:
  - Employed 53%
  - Receiving a pension 6%
  - Unemployed 19%
  - Receiving Social Security 28%
  - Receiving SSI 22%

- Surveys of pantry users based on self reporting show the following health issues:
  - High Blood Pressure
  - Diabetes
  - Asthma
  - Overweight
  - Depression

Surveys noted that some health problems associated with food insecurity are related to an increase in fat consumption. Fat is the cheapest form of calories and keeps you full longer.

A survey of food pantry users conducted by the University Wisconsin Extension showed:

- Users identified availability and access issues including:
  - Lack of variety in available food,
  - Lack of freedom to choose/receive pre-selected food,
  - Lack of confidence in the quality and safety of the food,
  - Education is not provided on nutrition/how to prepare pre-selected items,
  - Lack of a working refrigerator and/or stove,
  - Lack of transportation to the pantry site,
  - Limited hours and days of operation of the pantry(ies) conflicting with child care and/or work schedule; and
  - Atmosphere can be degrading/not made to feel comfortable accepting handouts.

- It was noted by some respondents that food waste occurs when they do not need the food provided, do not want the food provided, do not like the food provided and/or do not know how to prepare the food provided.

- Users also indicated the resources that would be helpful to them included:
  - Help in applying for FoodShare.
  - Affordable housing.
  - Affordable child care.
  - Garden Space.
  - Learning to budget.
  - Transportation.
In addition to gathering information on and from the three counties, research included reviewing information on what many counties and regions nationally and in Wisconsin have initiated or completed in terms of studies and/or plans to coordinate food related programs and resources. These varied from Portage County’s Hunger and Poverty Prevention Partnership, Kenosha’s Sustainable Edible Economic Development Project (SEED) – Racine/Kenosha Community Action Agency, Waukesha’s Food Recovery Program, Racine’s Eat Right and Vernon County, Wisconsin – Community Food Assessment, to name a few. These studies and plans included ideas and strategies for economic development, sustainable farming, buying locally, distribution of food to people who want and need it, increasing the opportunity to accept donations of fresh food, developing alternative food sources for charitable groups, farm to school programs, healthier choices of food in school systems and senior dining programs, food access in rural areas, affordable food purchasing and cooking programs, community kitchens, farm tours, etc. Overall, food initiatives throughout the state are focusing on increasing the food supply to individuals and families in need with an emphasis on improving nutrition, economic development through buying locally, improved collaboration and coordination of existing resources and in developing new programs and services as well as applying for grants and funds.

Much of the focus throughout the state and nationally is to move from just talking about hunger to supporting organizations working to end hunger in three ways.

1. Increasing access to programs, public and private that provide food to children, families and individuals.
2. Connecting children, families and individuals to healthy food through strengthening community resources.
3. Educating - improving knowledge about available programs and how to stretch limited resources.

In fact, the focus has moved from hunger to food security. Food security for a household means access by all members at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. (Per the United States Department of Agriculture) Food security, at a minimum, includes:

- The ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods.
- Assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (that is, without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies).

(Attached to the plan is the full explanation of Food Security and Food Insecurity)

As we look at addressing hunger/food security, many of the ideas these initiatives/organizations/projects share are:

- School meal programs – including providing a healthy breakfast and nutritionally balanced lunches.
- Education – encourage healthy food choices through teaching practical nutrition information, cooking skills, food budgeting including how this will impact on health and wellness.
- Linking individuals and families to other resources including FoodShare (formerly Food Stamps) and other programs to improve their overall economic well being such as BadgerCare, Wisconsin Works (W2), Energy Assistance and Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).
- Increasing access to fresh produce (fruits and vegetables) including ideas such as Farm to School, NOURISH, community or neighborhood gardens and farmer’s market vendors that accept FoodShare, WIC and other public assistance benefits.
- After school and child care programs that promote healthy snacking and eating behaviors.
- Expanding the reach of summer meal and school vacation food programs for children.
• Ensuring access to healthy, balanced diets for pregnant women, pre-school children and the elderly.
• Ensuring access to nutritious food in shelters, pantries and other feeding programs.
• Providing education about and linking individuals and families to available resources and assistance.

The original intent of this project was to develop a comprehensive strategy and business plan including a physical plant, staff position(s) and programmatic structure for a regional clearinghouse. The research conducted over the past 9-months coupled with current economic conditions, indicates an investment in capital equipment and leased/rented space is not required at this point in time. The strategy developing both locally and throughout many communities is to build upon the existing, established infrastructure. As stated in the April – June 2010 Quarterly Report, “In conclusion, meetings with Feeding America, Hunger Task Force and NOURISH in tandem with information provided by the pantries, illustrates the need for a comprehensive strategy that will build on existing resources and organizations and foster capacity for improved integration and collaboration to support and expand the food delivery systems in the tri-county area. The final plan will incorporate this strategy to ensure development of a system to support both the current and long term needs.” As Mr. Weissert describes the current situation, we need to be more frank in understanding the changing nature of the community and the relationship of the participants; the working poor, the stressed households, and begin to educate and partner in addressing the changes.

Proposal

The Food Initiative proposal consists of building blocks that construct a comprehensive strategy to support and expand the food delivery systems of the three counties. The strategy includes increasing access to public and private programs that provide food, strengthening community resources that connect children, families and individuals to healthy food and improving knowledge about programs for providers and those receiving food. The strategy also focuses on how to maximize limited resources.

Food for Tomorrow
Building Block One: Program Development & Quality Improvement

Within each county develop resources to support, improve and expand both short and long term food security capacity and hunger issues. The Tri-County United Ways will support funding for full time staffing, through a contract with an existing non-profit organization, preferably an organization with experience in food security/hunger issues. Ultimately, implementing the following across the three counties will lead to improved efficiencies, provide for distribution across a broader area and provide access to a larger variety of food resources/ producers.

In general, Building Block 1 - Program Development and Quality Assurance will promote development of a sustainable local food system through:

- Engaging, educating and mobilizing a broad network of county residents and organizations.
- Improving access to healthy locally produced foods for all members of the community, especially the low income population.
- Serving as a point person to assist with programs, projects, policies and partnerships for a sustainable local food system.
- Assisting with an ongoing community food assessment for identifying resources and needs regarding the local food system, underserved population and key stakeholders.
- Strengthening links between existing food system groups.
- Assisting food programs to help low income individuals and families to access other food resources such as Women, Infant and Children’s (WIC) Program, FoodShare, etc.
- Continuing to improve cold storage capacities for all food programs/pantries to increase opportunities to accept donations requiring refrigeration/freezing.
- Working with food programs to develop and institute consistent operational practices of accountability for distribution of food resources, procedures to promote community services and remove barriers for participants (individuals and families).
- Working with schools and other child-serving organizations that are beginning to consider various food program concepts including access to healthy food choices, importance of local food and farm to school programs.
- Developing food resources for rural areas and for other populations unable to access existing food resources due to transportation constraint(s), distance to the organization or service and/or limited hours of service.

More specifically, some of the responsibilities will include but not be limited to:

Developing and maintaining relationships and regular contact with consumer food suppliers, including but not limited to:
- Food pantries
- Meal programs (church, civic, community)
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) administrative entity and vendors
- Food Banks
- Residential and non-residential programs serving low income individuals and families
- Schools
- Other feeding programs (NOURISH, Summer Lunch)

This will be accomplished by attending and participating in food group meetings, providing on-site support, technical assistance and information, establishing and sharing principles of good practice, providing or arranging for training and annually assisting in assessing needs (e.g. staff, volunteer, equipment).
Developing and maintaining relationships and regular contact with current and potential food resources including but not limited to:

- Food Producers
- Food Distributors
- Farmers
- Restaurants/Caterers
- Food Banks/Clearinghouses
- Farmer’s Markets
- Hospitals
- Schools

This will be accomplished by serving as the key contact for donations, providing technical assistance, information and education and sharing the annual needs assessment.

Within both the consumer food supplier and food resources/producers systems, coordinate and collaborate with other food initiatives to identify best practices, shared programming opportunities, program development and other options to educate, advocate and volunteer.

Develop communication strategies, including a website, which provides a connection between the consumer food supplier, food resources/producers, the donors/volunteers and the end user.

Expand storage facility possibilities, as needed, including geographic locations in each county, type of storage options including dry, refrigeration and freezer and pick-up and delivery options.

Work with the existing pantry/consumer food supplier system to expand the:

- Hours and days of operation
- Access to healthy, nutritionally sound and culturally appropriate foods
- Research a mobile pantry, as an option

Research the feasibility of developing and establishing a Food Recovery Program.

Research the feasibility of establishing a ‘kitchen incubator’.

Participate in researching and writing grant applications.

**Building Block Two: Programs**

While gathering information for Sheboygan County, the staff at the Sheboygan and Plymouth Area United Way had the opportunity to meet and work with NOURISH Farm to Family Philanthropy a program of Sheboygan County Interfaith Organization (SCIO). Building Block Two - Programs is to provide funding to NOURISH and other food programs. NOURISH is a four pronged educational program. Through demonstration and execution, NOURISH creates a collaboration between local farmers, culinary professionals, volunteers and individuals and families.

NOURISH currently provides:

- Farm to Table Tours – individuals and/or groups spend an afternoon at a local farm harvesting fruits and/or vegetables and then with the help of a chef, prepare a fresh meal for individuals and/or families residing in a homeless shelter or other transitional housing program.
- Snack Attack – a NOURISH volunteer/ambassador hands out freshly harvested veggie snacks, string cheese along with colorful stickers and stories of where the food comes from to children at the Boys and Girls Club’s Stayer Center and Washington School sites.
NOURISH Harvest Hotline – rescues fresh fruit and vegetables that would otherwise go to waste due to weather conditions. Rescued fruits and vegetables are donated and are canned/frozen for later use.

This past summer, NOURISH partnered with United Way, Head Start, the Sheboygan Area School District and SCIO for the Free Healthy Summer Lunch Program serving two schools (Sheridan and Jefferson) in the City of Sheboygan. In May of 2010, 47% of the children in the Sheboygan Area School District qualified for free/reduced school lunch. Summer is when children are most at-risk for hunger as most do not receive lunches as they would during the school year. Through a quickly formed partnership over 200 free lunches were served daily during the month of July 2010. These lunches included fruit and veggies plus cheese and sausages donated by local companies.

NOURISH focuses on the need for healthy food to address obesity and other health related risks, volunteerism and asset building by linking adults volunteers with children/families and individuals via experiences that will impact positively on behaviors.

NOURISH currently operates with a total volunteer staff and without funding programs will be cut or reduced in 2011. Funding through the Food Initiative for NOURISH will support a full time staff position.

Based on interest in ‘Farm to Table’ programming in Manitowoc and Fond du Lac counties, the staffing resource will work with NOURISH and representatives from the counties to explore implementation of program components.

Building Block Three: Logistics

Support for pantries and other food organizations to assist individuals and families in accessing other needed support programs and services including Women, Infant and Children (WIC), FoodShare (formerly Food Stamps), BadgerCare (Medicaid Programs) and connections to other appropriate community resources. Part of the model for food security is a safety net - helping individuals and family’s access food assistance through publicly funded programs. Pantries, mainly those that provide The Emergency Food Assistance Program (formerly commodities), supply food packages that are as nutritionally balanced as possible and ideally contain a 2-5 day supply of food that is adjusted to the size of the household. Pantry food generally was to be a supplement rather than a primary source of food security. Due to the changing nature of the food pantry system, the food pantries provide has become integral to the support of families and for many has become their primary source of food.

Building Block 3 – Logistics will make available financial support for interested food pantries and other food organizations in the three counties to apply for funding for computers, printers and internet access. Pantry volunteers will be able to assist pantry users in using the computer to research eligibility for State and Federal programs including health, nutrition, child care, prescription drug plans, energy assistance and tax credits. Pantry users would also be able to apply on line with the assistance of a pantry or food program volunteer. The State of Wisconsin has a website access.wi.gov that allows for on line gathering of information, determining potential eligibility and applying on line for benefits and/or services.

The computer/logistics system would also be used by the pantry or food program for assessment and quality assurance activities, communication, tracking of food inventories, maintaining a website, compiling and tracking pantry user information and other approved uses.
Building Block Four: Nutrition

Sheboygan County has three farmer’s markets operating in the county through the Sheboygan County Interfaith Organization (SCIO). In the City of Sheboygan during the summer and fall months the farmer’s market operates twice per week and in the winter there is a one day per week indoor farmer’s market. There is a summer through fall farmer’s market one day per week in the City of Plymouth. These farmer’s markets are certified to provide access to low-income seniors/elderly and women, infant and children (WIC) household through the federal and state program guidelines. Currently, the senior/elderly and women and children use of nutrition program coupons at these farmer’s markets is above the statewide average.

Building Block 4 – Nutrition is to expand the number of children, individuals and families who would be able to purchase fresh produce – vegetables and fruits - through using their FoodShare benefits. The approach is two –pronged. One is to educate farmer’s market vendors regarding the FoodShare program and obtaining agreement from some of the vendors to accept FoodShare benefits. Secondly, FoodShare recipients will need to be informed of their ability to use FoodShare benefits to purchase fruit and vegetables at the farmer’s market.

To implement this option, SCIO will need to purchase Electronic Benefit Transaction equipment to assist the vendor and the FoodShare purchaser complete the purchase transaction. There is an initial expense to purchase the wireless terminal and then a monthly fee for use of the terminal.

Building Block Five: Community Support

Financial and in-kind support for food pantries and other feeding programs is needed. Community support is and will be needed for maintaining and expanding current programs and services and in developing and sustaining new programs. This will include, but is not limited to: volunteers, food and financial donations, donations of other basic need (non-food) items, technical assistance, etc. As an example, volunteers and food donations will be needed to maintain and expand the summer lunch program for children and recently a group of volunteers from a Sheboygan County based company helped at food pantries in Sheboygan and Fond du Lac counties.

Building Block Six: Storage & Transit

The pantry survey identified storage as an issue for local food pantries. At times, the pantries need storage for food requiring refrigeration or freezing beyond their current capacities. As an example, Glacier Transit and Storage (GTS) provides in-kind support by providing dry and refrigerated storage for items that cannot be stored at the existing pantries. In October of 2010, GTS provided storage for a large donation of potatoes. Expansion is necessary to provide each county a location(s) for dry, refrigerated and frozen item storage, allowing for pick up or delivery of stored items.

On site storage often is an issue for pantries and feeding programs. A small financial assistance fund will be established to assist pantries, on an application basis, to purchase or replace refrigerators and freezers, used for onsite storage.
(Attached is the full budget proposal)

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<th>Amount</th>
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The first year budget for all six building blocks is $102,870. Revenue totaling $12,500 has been designated during the 2010 Sheboygan and Plymouth Area United Way campaign, chaired by Jim and Jan Sartori for the Food for Tomorrow initiative.