Northfield as a Living Lab: Community-Wide Food Recovery Expansion

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If you have come to help me you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together...
Carleton’s Food Recovery Network Chapter Timeline

2014:
- Carleton Food Recovery Network (FRN) Chapter Formed

2016:
- Carleton FRN collects over 8,700 pounds of food from two dining halls

2017:
- Carleton FRN volunteers log over 1,200 hours

2018:
- Carleton partners with the Northfield Community Action Center and the City of Northfield to submit a $58,000 MPCHA grant for Carleton FRN volunteers to add retail food rescue to their volunteer duties and has quickly transported over 19,000

2019:
- Refrigeration infrastructure installed at the Community Action Center food shelf
Supershelf/Food Shelf

Anika Rychner
Program Director
Community Action Center of Northfield
INTRODUCTION

In 2015, an estimated 12.7% of U.S. households experienced food insecurity. An estimated 46.5 million individuals rely on charitable food assistance like food shelves.

Food shelf clients are concerned about:
- Poor dietary quality
- High chronic disease rates
- Range and quality of food offered

Food shelves face both supply and demand issues.

STUDY AIM

- **Aim:** Evaluate the impact of a behavioral economic intervention in two food shelves on the nutritional quality of food selected by clients.
- **Primary Research Question:** Will the intervention lead to change in HEI scores for food selected by clients? (See right for HEI explanation)
- **Hypothesis:** On average, HEI-2010 scores of foods selected by clients will be higher after the intervention.

THE HEALTHY EATING INDEX (HEI)

The HEI is a scoring measure that assesses diet quality of specific foods based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. It has a scoring maximum of 100 points; 100 being the highest diet quality and 0 being the lowest.

THE INTERVENTION

**6 STEPS TO SUPERSHELF SYSTEMS CHANGE**

- 1. **SUPPLY**
  - Foundation: Client-centered environment, approach, & culture
- 2. **STRETCH**
  - Creating welcoming environments for communities to access appealing, healthy food
- 3. **SHIFT**
  - Transforming food shelves creating welcoming environments for communities to access appealing, healthy food
- 4. **SHOWCASE**
  - Prepost comparison in two intervention food shelves
- 5. **SURVEY**
  - We measured change in inventory in the two intervention food shelves as well as two control food shelves
- 6. **SUSTAIN**

EVALUATION STUDY DESIGN

Prepost comparison in two intervention food shelves
- We compared data from 71 clients before and 70 clients after the intervention.
- We measured change in inventory in the two intervention food shelves as well as two control food shelves.
4. Eligible and ineligible projects

There are a number of best practices a community can implement that result in greater collection of recyclable materials. Implementation of proven best practices can improve recycling program efficiency and effectiveness.

Funding will be awarded for projects that focus on increasing recycling and/or organics collection processing. Some examples of best practices include:

- Increase collection of recyclables (e.g., implementation of a countywide curbside program, increasing frequency of collection, or collection of new materials).
- Transition to single-sort recycling collection.
- Establish or expand curbside, drop-site, or processing capacity of source-separated organic materials (SSOM).
- Establish or expand food rescue or food-to-livestock programs.
- Development or expansion of programs for hard to recycle and bulky materials, including, but not limited to, mattresses, car seats, concrete, shingles, electronic waste, etc.).
- Any other project that will expand or improve recycling or composting programs in greater Minnesota.
EPA Hierarchy

Food Recovery Hierarchy

Source Reduction & Reuse
Reduce the volume of surplus food generated

Feed Hungry People
Donate extra foods to food banks, soup kitchens and shelters

Feed Animals
Divert food scraps to animal feed

Industrial uses
Provide waste oils for rendering and fuel conversion and food scraps for digestion to recover energy

Composting
Create a nutrient-rich soil amendment

Landfill / Incineration
Last resort to disposal

Most Preferred

Least Preferred
City of Northfield

Ben Martig
City Administrator
City of Northfield
Project
Unexpected Benefits

Organic Egg Recovery
Frozen Meat
Frozens Recovered Soups

Lessons learned

Data gathering changed
Keeping your eye out for opportunities, tell people what you are doing!
Stay flexible as your project evolves
Questions?

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