Growing Together:
Cultivating partnerships to improve access to affordable, nutritious and safe foods to individuals with low income

Live viewing and discussion: Monday, July 20, 2020, 12:40-2:00 pm (EST)
#SNEB2020: What Food Future?
Panelists

Trinity Allison
Blake Connolly
Christine Hradek
Sarah Rautio
Natalie Sehi
Learning Objectives

- **Learning Objective 1:** Describe how six Midwestern states are partnering to leverage resources for policy, systems, and environmental changes to promote healthy food access and availability for people with low income.
- **Learning Objective 2:** Identify common evaluation measures that are of value to cross-disciplinary programs and community organizations.
- **Learning Objective 3:** Utilize shared tools to adapt, implement and evaluate community donation garden projects to improve access to affordable, nutritious and safe foods.
Food Insecurity

The state of being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food through socially acceptable ways.

Food Insecurity by State
- Illinois 10% (pre-COVID)
- Indiana 12% (pre-COVID)
- Iowa 12% (pre-COVID)
- Michigan 14% (pre-COVID)
- Nebraska 12% (pre-COVID)
SNAP-Ed Funding

SNAP-Ed is a national program aimed at making healthy choices easier for Americans with low income.

Direct Education + Policy, System and Environmental Interventions = Sustained Change

Visit with state agencies and regional offices.
Master Gardeners

- Volunteers
- Significant training in horticulture practices
- Serve communities through beautification projects and education
Leap of Faith

Could two large programs with different administrative requirements, priorities, audiences and leadership jointly tackle the problem of food insecurity and healthy food access.
The answer is YES!

Together, we can make fresh fruits and vegetables more accessible for families experiencing poverty.

We can use the assets of SNAP-Ed and Master Gardeners to create a new initiative that makes a big difference in communities.
## Asset-focused Approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SNAP-Ed</th>
<th>Master Gardener</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Funding</td>
<td>● Volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Connections to food banks and pantries</td>
<td>● Connections among growers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Nutrition education and resources</td>
<td>● Gardening knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Increase Access to Produce for Families with Low-Income

- Extension Educators
- SNAP-Ed
- Community Volunteers
- Master Gardeners
- Food Pantries and Donation Sites
- Local Growers
Growing Together Nebraska: Community Donation Garden Project

Teamwork:
- Connecting local Extension staff, active Master Gardeners and local community organizations.

Purpose:
- Increasing food security and promoting healthy food access for those families and individuals who are food insecure (youth, adults, and older adults).
- Connect with partner organizations to increase Extension’s reach to low-income Nebraskans.

Goals:
- Assist in establishing successful gardens at program sites.
- Facilitate the integration of gardening and nutrition education curriculum.
- Support individuals and families in learning to utilize produce grown in the garden to make healthy meals.
- Connect professionals and families to research-based information and resources available through Nebraska Extension.
- Provide volunteer opportunities for Master Gardeners.
One Example:
Nutritional Info and Recipes connected to donated food.
NUTRITION BENEFITS

- Potassium: may help to maintain a healthy blood pressure
- Vitamin C: helps heal cuts and helps the immune system
- Fiber: may lower your risk of heart disease

STORING

- Broccoli should be stored unwashed in loose unsealed bags in the refrigerator.
- Refrigerate broccoli and use within 3-5 days.

CLEANING

- Rinse broccoli under cool running water before eating.

PREPARING

- Cut the crowns away from the large stems of the broccoli.
- Break the crown up into bite-sized florets.
- Add broccoli to warm pasta dishes, pasta salads, and stir-fries for added crunch and color.
- Eat raw broccoli with a low-fat dressing or dip.
- Use a vegetable peeler and peel off the outer skin of the stem.
- Chop the stem up and add to soups and casseroles.

Steaming

Place 3/4 to 1 inch of water in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Add the broccoli to the pan and cover; reduce heat to medium and let cook for 5-6 minutes. The broccoli is done when you can pierce the stem with a fork. Remove from heat and place in a serving dish.

Roasting

Preheat oven to 400°F. Mix broccoli florets with 1 tablespoon olive oil and your favorite seasonings. Spread broccoli into a single layer on a baking sheet. Roast in the oven, about 18 minutes, or until broccoli is tender and lightly browned.
“There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure.” - Colin Powell
Planning is Key!

1. **Identify a Need**
   - Work closely within your community to discuss and assess community issues, wants, needs, etc.

2. **Plan/Coordinate**
   - Is there a community garden already established? Will you be starting from scratch?
   - What resources are available and/or desired?

3. **Where to Donate?**
   - Generate a list of potential options.
   - Develop partnerships. Discuss logistics.

4. **What to Grow?**
   - What are the needs of the community?
   - Can your garden fill a gap/need? What resources are needed?

Great Resource: [https://www.extension.iastate.edu/ffed/community-donation-gardening-toolkit/](https://www.extension.iastate.edu/ffed/community-donation-gardening-toolkit/)
Nebraska’s 2020 GTN Timeline

- **December 2019**: Request for Application released
- **January/February 2020**: Informational GTN webinars
- **Extension Professionals & Master Gardeners** reach out to potential partners
- **Meet with partners and draft application**

- **February 14, 2020**: Applications are due
- **March 2, 2020**: Notification of award
- **Spring/Summer 2020**: Watch training webinars, purchase budget items, plant, grow, and harvest
- **September/October 2020**: Evaluation and end of season reports

***GTN funds must be spent by September 30th, 2020.***
Logistics

- Early and clear communication is important.
- Applications submitted electronically.
- Providing an example of a completed proposal is helpful.
- Determine limitations.
  - Maximum grant amount
  - Allowable expenses
  - # of applications per county
  - Team requirements (who is involved, etc)
  - Eligibility from year to year
- End goal is sustainability.
Grow Strategy
Interested in donating produce to the Antelope County Food Pantry? During the month of June, please call the Antelope County Extension Office at (402) 887-5414 or e... See More
Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants must include at least one of each of the following:

- Nebraska Extension county office staff
- Active Master Gardener volunteer(s)
- At least one representative from a recipient agency (for example, staff representing local food bank, food pantry, or free meal service)
Critical Questions

- What is easy to grow in your state?
- How do you engage volunteers?
- What can last on a food pantry shelf?
- What equipment/resources does the pantry have?
- How often does the pantry distribute food?
- What do pantry clients want to see?
- What is culturally appropriate for clients?
- What can pantry clients use?
- What do pantry clients know how to use?
Implementing Growing Together
Community Partnerships
Nutrition Education
PSE Interventions
Community Partnerships

Public Housing
Community Centers
Grocery Stores
Community Colleges
Parks & Rec

PANtries
Churches
Schools
Health Clinics
Private Sector
Nutrition Education
Educational Resources
PSE Change Strategies
"I love the change, this is a blessing. I am crying". - Guest

"I really like the change and I like to select the foods I want for my family, this is a great thing". - Guest

"I'm thankful for the opportunity to give back, you are doing something amazing, love being a part of it". - Manager at Sherwin Williams

"This is the best thing we did! I absolutely LOVE the change!!!" - Director of Community Care Center
Reporting & Evaluation

**Increasing Food Access**
- Pounds of produce donated*
- Types of produce donated
- Number of locations receiving produce*
- Number of participants receiving produce*

**Increasing Food Utilization**
- Pantry environment changes
- Produce uptake and waste
- Nutrition education contacts
- Participant success stories

**Increasing Community Capacity**
- Number of volunteers and contributed hours*
- Community partners*
- Dollars leveraged*
- Master Garden education contacts
- Community partnership & capacity questionnaire
- Community food insecurity awareness

* Denotes shared multi-state metric
Objective 1: Increase Client Choice for Nutritious Options

Strategies:
1. Encourage clients to choose different types of FSE they would like to take.
2. Ensure pantry hosts a "shopping style" distribution (set up like a grocery store).
3. Clients are able to come to the pantry for food more than once per month.
4. Food pantry offers items from each of the five food groups (fruits, vegetables, grains, proteins, dairy).
5. Encourages nutritious donations (e.g., by distributing a list of suggested items or asking donors not to donate certain foods).
6. Food pantry is listed on Illinois.gov website that seeks donations from local gardeners/farmers or community gardens.
7. Has established nutritional policy used for purchasing food for clients.
8. A policy is in place for proper food safety.
9. Write total number of boxes marked.

Notes:

Objective 2: Provide Various Forms of Fruits and/or Vegetables

Mark off each type as you see them, below:
- Fresh
- Canned (may not be canned in a jar)
- Frozen (may not be frozen)
- Dried (may not be dried)
- Juicy (may not be juiced)

Write total number of boxes marked.

Notes:

Objective 3: Market "Nudges" In-House Products

Strategies:
- Market "nudges" FSE as available to clients.
- Offers food samples to clients.
- Offers healthy eating materials that promote FSE and visible (e.g., posters, flyers, recipe skits, etc.).
- Displays/edges supporting materials for FSE (e.g., shelf talkers/shelf tags, nutrition information, etc.).
- Includes at least one FSE item in a bundle to display items together as a set (e.g., beans and rice).
- FSE are stocked to appear abundant.
- Nudges FSE are displayed and labeled to be visible easily from the eye-level of the average client.
- At least one FSE item is within reach of any client entering the pantry during distribution.
- Write total number of boxes marked.

Notes:

Objective 4: Provide Various Types of Fruits and/or Vegetables

Mark off each color type as you see them, below:
- Red
- Yellow/Orange
- Green
- Blue/Purple

Write total number of boxes marked.

Notes:

Data Collection
Monthly Surveys
End of Year Surveys

Pantry Assessment
Nutrition Environment Food Pantry Assessment Tool (NEFPAT)

Reporting Systems
PEARS
Qualtrics
Google Sheets
National Framework

- ST5: Need and Readiness
- ST6: Champions
- ST7: Organizational Partnerships
- MT5: Nutrition Supports
- LT5: Nutrition Supports Implementation
- LT9: Leveraged Resources
- LT12: Food Systems
2019 SNAP-Ed Highlights
Iowa State University
Michigan State University
Purdue University
University of Illinois
University of Nebraska
University of Wisconsin

Growing Together

Projects leveraged $84,634 in non-SNAP-Ed funds to support their work.

456 Master Gardener volunteers contributed time to the project.

1,048 community partners and agencies cooperated on the project.

126,930 people with low income were served by the project.

256 food pantries and distribution sites received produce as a result of the project.

169,427 pounds of fruits and vegetables supplied to food pantries and distribution sites.

Growing Together is a multi-state SNAP-Ed project to increase access to fruits and vegetables in food pantries. SNAP-Ed, the Master Gardener Program, and food pantries are working together to build and maintain donation gardens in their communities.

This project is funded by USDA National Nutrition Assistance Program. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.
State Impact Reporting

Growing Together Nebraska 2019 Impact Report
Increasing access of fruits and vegetables

Garden Collection Project
Growing Together Nebraska (GTN) is a donation garden project that increases food security and promotes healthy food access for families and individuals who are food insecure.

Preparation of the project was completed by 13 Nebraska Extension educators during the 2019 growing season.

In the fourth year of the project, GTN recruited 13 gardens and delivered 20,500 pounds of produce to 14 distribution sites.

Fresh Produce
For the fourth consecutive year, Nebraska Extension's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) awarded funding to communities across the state to provide fresh, locally grown produce to those in need in Nebraska during the 2019 growing season. Across 10 county sites, including 11 gardens, a total of 35,408 pounds of produce was donated to local partners, with an estimated value of $90,000.

35,408 pounds = 106,225 servings of fruits & vegetables

Partners receive funding to better serve families

Partnership continues to provide education, fresh fruits and vegetables

Community donates over 25,000 pounds of produce

Partners support local garden projects. (Photo by Cheryl Lirick)

Partnering with communities to provide fresh produce.

Access to healthier foods leads to healthier eating

Partnerships continue to provide education, fresh fruits and vegetables

SNAP-Ed works: Transforming communities, making healthy choices easier for Illinois families
Lessons Learned - Food Safety

- Food safety is critical and requires awareness-building as well as training.

- Focus on providing action-oriented guidance and provide recommendations for carrying out the guidance in a garden environment. Avoid examples that use farm imagery or language.
  - Example from Iowa:
Keep pets and wild animals away from plot.

A tall deer fence at Onawa demonstration garden helps to prevent animals including deer from entering the garden.

A fence built with chicken wire is effective at preventing rabbits, cats, and other small animals from entering the garden and compromising the produce.

Compost or discard bruised or damaged produce.
Handwashing Station Photos
GROWING TOGETHER: FOOD SAFETY IN DONATION GARDENS

- Keep pets and wild animals away from plot.
- Use municipal (drinking) water to rinse and remove visible dirt from produce.
- Harvest produce into properly cleaned and sanitized bins using clean utensils.
- Wash hands before and after handling produce.
- Discard or compost bruised or dropped produce.
- Transport produce to food pantry in a clean, covered vehicle.

PERSONAL
- Restrain hair
- No eating or smoking on facility grounds
- Do not work while sick (fever, diarrhea, etc.)
- No excessive jewelry
- Wear clean clothing

Developed by Shannon Coleman, assistant professor and state human sciences specialist in food safety with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach and Heather J. Pampena, 2017 Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition Capstone Scholar Summer Research Experience Intern and student at University of Wisconsin-Madison.
Lessons Learned - COVID Adaptations

- Focus on staff and volunteer safety, allow any administrative flexibility that is possible.
- Be aware that volunteer base may include people at high risk and provide guidance that assumes such.
- Talk with pantry partners about adjustments to their service, hours and relevant precautions.
Lessons Learned - Garden Safety Plans

- Volunteering during this time is optional
- Communicate best practices to volunteers utilizing recommendations based on CDC guidelines - face coverings, handwashing
- Oversee the use of shared tools and disinfect them before and after use OR ask volunteers to bring their own tools and not to share
- Limit number of volunteers working at the garden simultaneously to maintain a minimum social distance of 6 feet
- Postpone events/tours
- Ask anyone showing signs of illness to leave
Signage
Welcome To Our Donation Garden!

This garden is cared for by Purdue Extension Master Gardeners and community volunteers. The produce is donated to food pantries in our area. Thank you to the gardeners who are making healthy foods easier to access for our food insecure neighbors.

Did you know?

1 in 8 Hoosiers struggle with food insecurity - meaning they do not have access to sufficient food to make a healthy diet.
Keys to Successful Collaboration
Partners are flexible and creative
The right people are at the table throughout planning and implementation
Impact first, credit second
High level leadership values collaboration
Strong communication throughout

- Consistent communication through the application, planning, and implementation process with Master Gardeners, SNAP-Ed, agencies receiving donations and other volunteers
- Agree to a plan of action through a team consensus
- Encourage group attendance and engagement through consistent days/times for working sessions
- Use multiple channels of communication - email, phone calls, text groups, social media groups
Celebrate your successes!

- Bethany Community Gardens
- NUSA (Neighborhoods USA) 2020 National Neighborhood Association of the year, multi-neighborhood partnership Award Recipient

- Bethany Community Gardens was created in 2018 to Build Community through the Gardening Together mini-grant on the southside of Indianapolis. The Garden Council continues to engage neighbors and neighborhoods with gardening instruction, information sessions, community meals, friendship building and giving those in need quality, fresh produce.
## Contact the presenters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trinity Allison</td>
<td><a href="mailto:trinitya@illinois.edu">trinitya@illinois.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Illinois</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blake Connolly</td>
<td><a href="mailto:baconnol@purdue.edu">baconnol@purdue.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purdue University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christine Hradek, MPH</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Hradek@iastate.edu">Hradek@iastate.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa State University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Rautio</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rautio@msu.edu">rautio@msu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan State University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natalie Sehi</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nsehi2@unl.edu">nsehi2@unl.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Nebraska</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Share your questions and feedback live on July 20th at 11:40 Central Time