

REDUCING FOOD WASTE AND IMPROVING NUTRITION STATUS: INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS IN FOOD RECOVERY PROGRAMS

Lauri Wright, PhD, RDN, LDN, FAND

Jen Ross, DCN, RDN, LDN, FAND

University of North Florida Center for Nutrition and Food Security

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- At the end of this session, participants will be able to identify key community partners to develop a food recovery and meal delivery program.
- At the end of this session, participants will be able to describe strategies to overcome common barriers to implementing a food recovery and delivery program.
- At the end of this session, participants will be able to describe the impact of a food recovery program for volunteers and participants.

DOUBLE TROUBLE

- FOOD INSECURITY

- 1 in 6 Americans lack access to an adequate amounts of affordable and nutritious food
- In Florida, 1 in 5 are food insecure
- The recent pandemic has increased food insecurity, particularly in vulnerable populations

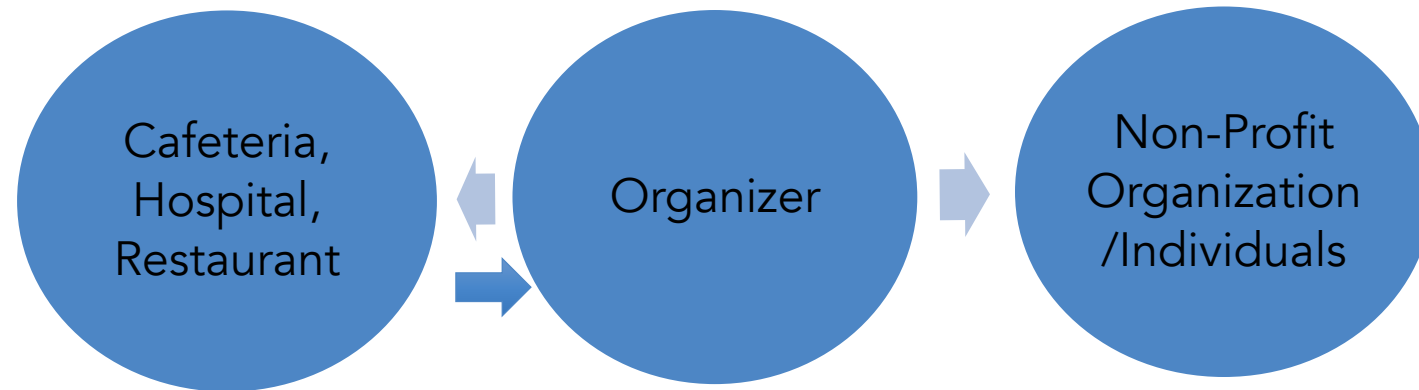
- FOOD WASTE

- Did you know that 40% of all food produced is wasted?
- 4x amount of food needed to feed the hungry

A POSSIBLE SOLUTION?

**FOOD RECOVERY – MEAL PREPARATION &
DELIVERY**

THE MODEL



UNF CNFS FOOD RECOVERY & MEAL DELIVERY PROGRAMS



FOOD FIGHTERS



FOOD FIGHTERS MODEL

- Partner with the on-campus cafe
- Student volunteers to recover, repackage & deliver
- Recover food that would normally be wasted 2x/week
- Repackage into healthful meals
- Deliver to the Northeast Florida AIDS network and other area social service



MEALS ON WINGS: THE PROBLEM

- Meals on Wheels is available for homebound seniors however, demand has surpassed capacity
- In Northeast Florida alone, over 1000 seniors in Jacksonville who are eligible for meals on wheels remain on a waiting list due to funding limitations

“I always look forward to Wednesdays and Fridays”- MOW Participant



MEALS ON WINGS: A SOLUTION

- Partner with area hospitals to rescue unused prepared food that would normally be wasted
- Repackage the food into healthy, balanced meals
- Delivery the meals directly to homebound seniors
- Student volunteers recover, repackage, & deliver



MORE THAN A MEAL

- Social interaction
- Safety check
- Connection



*"What you bring me really saves
me from not eating at all." –*
MOW Participant

IMPACT

FOOD FIGHTERS:

- 18,000 meals provided

MEALS ON WINGS:

- 19,000 pounds of food recovered
- 12,000 meals delivered



“You all are a blessing.”- MOW Participant

RESEARCH

Receiving

Receiving home-delivered meals for a short duration significantly improves nutritional status, dietary intake, food security, loneliness, and social well-being in seniors

Volunteering

Volunteering with a food recovery/delivery program significantly improves students' empathy and social responsibility

**INTERESTED IN STARTING
YOUR OWN PROGRAM?**

THE INGREDIENTS

- STAFF
- COMMUNITY PARTNERS
- FACILITIES
- SUPPLIES
- VOLUNTEERS
- KEY COMMUNITY PARTNERS

THE INGREDIENTS: COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Identifying your partners
- How can you work together to solve a common problem?
- A university with a nutrition and dietetics program
- Communication is imperative

THE INGREDIENTS: STAFF

- UNFCNFS Food Recovery Team Includes:
 - 2 Registered Dietitians
 - 1 Chef
 - Many student volunteers
- Identify leaders with experience, connections within the community
- Willingness to serve others

THE INGREDIENTS: FACILITIES

- UNFCNFS currently utilizes the Food Lab in the Nutrition Department
- Can be an ideal space as it already equipped with most of the necessary equipment
- Considerations:
 - Scheduling
 - Dry storage
 - Freezer & refrigerator space
 - Equipment
 - Cleaning



THE INGREDIENTS: SUPPLIES

- Coolers for transporting food/meals
- Ice bricks for coolers
- Meal containers
 - Freezer and microwave safe
- Serving utensils
- Scale
- Labels/printer
 - Large font
- Cleaning supplies



THE INGREDIENTS: VOLUNTEERS



POTENTIAL CHALLENGES



Misconceptions on liability (Bill Emerson Act)



Uncertainties about the quantity and types of food available



Volunteers



Funding



Facilities



Access to seniors

THANK YOU!

For more information, please visit our website:
www.unf.edu/brooks/Center_for_Nutrition_and_Food_Security/

Dr. Lauri Wright: l.wright@unf.edu

Dr. Jen Ross: j.ross@unf.edu