**Food Assistance Advisory Committee Meeting**

January 24th, 2020 | 9:00 to 10:30

Thurston County Food Bank Warehouse and Distribution Center

**In Attendance:** Jeff Mathias (Blue Mountain Action Council), Leon Brauner (Ocean Shores Food Bank), Michelle Douglas (Emergency Food Network), Ken Trainor (Sunrise Outreach Center), Kris Van Gasken (Des Moines Area Food Bank), Robert Coit (Thurston County Food Bank), Christian Stephen (CAC of Lewis, Mason and Thurston Counties), Peny Archer (CSML), Aaron Czyzewski (FLL), Nikki Lloyd (Snoqualmie Valley Food Bank) and Trish Twomey (WFC)

**WSDA staff:** Kim Eads, Katie Raines, James Scovel, Kyle Merslich, Lisa White, Mallorie Shellmer and Nichole Garden

**Welcome and Intros:** Jeff welcomed the committee and called the meeting to order. Robert made housekeeping announcements. A special welcome to Mallorie Shellmer, she will be focusing on federal programs. Also welcome to Christian, who is new to committee.

**Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from the September 23, 2019 meeting were approved. Ken Trainor moved, and Michelle Douglas seconded.

**Review of Work:**

* **Civil Rights Task Force Update**

Katie Rains shared an update on the Taskforce. They have met twice; once to get feedback on the civil Rights tools and how it was working, and the second meeting was to review the USDA document and what the committee would like to see happen. Katie was tasked to find a contact at USDA from the Civil Rights office. It’s been hard tracking someone down but believes someone has been hired. She also contacted the Oregon Food Bank since they have updated their tool.

She will be turning this taskforce over to Mallorie Shellmer, with the goal to update civil rights toolkit which, USDA will need to approve. Mallorie said if anyone has thoughts or ideas on the policy to please contact her. Katie will send out an email introduction.

* **Subcontractors Resources Task Force Update**

Katie announced that Mallorie and Kyle will be point persons for this committee and she will be stepping back. The taskforce met twice and identified a few areas of work. 1. Commodity Management handout, which will be an introduction on distributing commodities for staff and volunteers. The committee can provide feedback at the group level. James has put something together so far and can be part of a manual.

* **Food Procurement Policy Update & Discussion**

There was discussion in September that there would be an email chat about this topic but there has been limited at this point. Jeff sent an email to inspire thoughts and discussions. In September,

Jeff heard that the communities would determine how EFAP funds are spent. (see page 32 of EFAP Manual) Opened discussion on how to change procurement priority system? Currently, the priority for procurement of food is based on economic side – cheapest food. The desire is to make it more robust and holistic – nutrition levels in purchased food, affecting local economies, welfare of workers and animals. (Good Food Procurement Policy – Jeff sent) Desire here is to **not** create a new policy but to create a framework encouraging those counties in how they would want to spend their funds.

Discussion – Kris the policy currently states you have to buy cheapest food is to be good stewards of the money, but healthy foods are not always the cheapest.

Nichole suggested to create a framework but include a wellness policy developed by contractor. She wants the choice to purchase healthier, nutritional dense food, instead of cheaper food. Jeff added or **local** food.

Kyle added the development relationships with local businesses in smaller communities and acquire nutritional dense foods best for their clients. Kim said policy should be cost effective; we should definition or clarity of framework (messaging) piece -more of a guideline. Kris added you don’t want someone coming back on you that you wasted money by purchasing a certain product; it should be free enough to make local purchases. James- In TEFAP ordering by choice rather than a specific price. Build in choice because everyone wants it.

Michelle inquired if this is an issue? Kim shared the issue came up many years ago at the EFAP Advisory group. Trish shared that she believed that EFAP leads could benefit from such a policy and it came up in the conference evaluations. Several examples were shared where this type of policy would be helpful. Jeff shared we should remember to support local farmers.

Kyle asked, “Could be a Nutrition Policy and then a procurement policy that reflects that nutrition policy?” Purchasing should revolve around the health of your clients. Availability of products through local distributors/food banks. There was further discussion on this topic. Do not order the priorities as currently stated in EFAP policies. Cost effectiveness, leveraging resources, building relationships and buying from farmers, etc.

Kyle summarized the suggested points so far:

* Support special program
* Health & preference of clients, culturally relevant food
* Good stewards of funds
* Role of relationship building
* Decision making of how foods are purchased

Kyle shared most of this definition is looking like what the SDN definition use to be. Folks are still reporting SDN clients. Robert said it was critically important to keep the SDN definition or category and lump together.

It was proposed that to acquire food, donations will remain a priority, but don’t prioritize other items to utilize state funds. (no order)

* Nonprofit distributors
* Wholesalers/food brokers
* Discount retailers
* Local retailers/farms

Michelle summed it up by stating: If unable to acquire donations, food panties should attempt to acquire food by apply these principles when utilizing state funds; nonprofit distributors, wholesalers/food brokers, discount retailers and local retailers/farms with an eye towards your local nutritional policies and equity practices.

**WSDA**

**Food Assistance (FA) Updates:** Kim Eads

1. New FA Baby! Kyle Merslich is the proud new papa of Zachary Lee Merslich, born on December 4th!
2. Welcome Mallorie Shellmer Mallorie was hired on December 2, 2019 as a Food Assistance Specialist for the Washington State Department of Agriculture’s (WSDA) Food Assistance programs. In addition, to her regular duties as a regional representative, she will be taking a deep dive into our federal programs to develop improvements. She graduated from The Evergreen State College with a focus in Business Administration and Community Development. She also holds a Career and Technical Education (CTE) teaching certificate in the field of Agriculture. Mallorie has extensive experience in farming and outdoor education through her professional experience working at GRuB, a non-profit based in Olympia, WA. WSDA is currently revising their regional representative’s territories and will send out a new listing before February.

**Federal Funding:**

1. **FFY 2020 CSFP budget** is final and includes a budget increase of $14,712 and a 6,004 caseload (same as last year). WSDA Food Assistance is waiting to send amendments until the TEFAP budget is final so they can do just do one amendment for both TEFAP and CSFP.
2. **FFY 2020 TEFAP budget** has “passed” but not finalized by USDA yet. We do know that TEFAP funding (national) was reduced from $100 million to $79.6 million. Our previous budget projections included an even larger reduction so we anticipate that you will receive additional TEFAP funding.
3. Waiting for more clarification from USDA on the “new” **Farm to Food Bank project** - a workgroup has been working on this within the State. Estimated Annual Value (2019-2023) $80,000 or more for first year, will continue for 4 years.
4. **FFY 2020 TMP funding and food is anticipated to continue throughout the year.** Phase 1 (January - March) funding is $354,000 and available now. We anticipate similar levels for Phase 2, 3, and 4. 100% of these funds are required to be passed through - state is prohibited from using these funds to pay for state-level work including NWH TMP related work. Last year the state was able to receive a federal grant for $75,000 to help pay for state level cost. It is unclear whether this is an option for 2020.
5. Reminder - TEFAP Risk Assessment is due by January 31.
6. Updated resources will be available on the website soon. Things like the 2019 County Fact Sheets which include data for all of our programs, the 2019 Farm to Food Pantry Report, the 2019 Farm to Food Pantry Legislative Fact Sheets, and the 2019 CSFP Participant Survey Results (Nutrition education focused.)

**EFAP Closeout report**

Kyle reminded us that Census is coming up and remind clients. EFAP close out report – numbers are consistent – heading down. Seniors are now over 20% of the population served (over 60), up 12.5%. Staff passed out EFAP Close-out report highlights. (see attached) Pounds of food distributed at all time high possibly TMP. Pounds per clients up, returning visits continue to stay high. New clients are going down. Tribal voucher numbers go down. Voucher values go up, more money. Tribal Food Pantries numbers are high but not as much food/resources. Full report on website. County fact sheets will be available soon.

**CSFP Survey Results** - Nicole Garden

Results from the 2019 survey were shared, distributed and reviewed. (see handout) The purpose of the survey is to be sure the nutrition education they are providing is effective and meaningful. Ten out of 13 lead contractors participated. 6004 people participate in CSFP, over 1,000 people completed survey. They had a 29% response rate. Some respondents said they did not have access to water, electricity or refrigeration. Nutrition information sited was important for not only customers but also informing the State on what to include in their food box. Future surveys will be sent out each April.

One lesson learned that more guidance is needed on how to administer the survey. Take out opened ended questions and make multiple choice. Only participants will complete survey not proxy. Each county that handles or participates in CSFP will get survey results for each county they administer the program for. For next year, each contractor will administer the survey at site or digitally.

**Legislative Updates** - Katie Rains

Katie reported that WSDA asked for an expansion to Farm to Food Pantry in their request, tripling the amount of funding they are currently receiving to expand program statewide. The Governor did not include the increase in his budget. Info on web site and an info graphic was distributed.

Advocates are also requesting funding for Capacity and Infrastructure grants which WSDA will administer.

Hunger Action Day is Feb. 3rd

**TEFAP/TMP**- James Scovel

James handed out a list of what food is coming in. (attached) He also reported that there an incredible amount of food coming. He is expecting 302 truckloads of food from January through March (10 M pounds of food) and another 289 truckloads April through June. Plus 29 trucks of milk. Lots of fresh and frozen products. Items include chicken, pork, fresh milk (TEFAP bonus) and eggs every month. Also canned protein, frozen protein, fish sticks and orange juice. Fresh fruit – apples.

James will not purchase beans for 2020, but still has beans in the system, unless he is offered Pinto beans. If you need some beans, please let him know. He encouraged sites to give as much product as clients can utilize.

James is also putting together a fact sheet on Trade Mitigation Products (TMP), how it works and how to increase distribution. He also reminded everyone that these products can be used for sampling. See website for more ideas and info. If you have edits to this fact sheet (attached), please send to James by Friday. James will be conducting a webinar on Feb 13th on CSFP and TEFAP reporting for contractors and subcontracts. If you need specific training, please contact James.

Jeff thanked Kim for advocating on behalf of programs to not change the name of TMP. Michelle thanked WSDA staff for all their work and information.