SNAP Outreach & Advocacy: Putting Service Insights to Action

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Outline:

- Framing Food Security/Insecurity
- Food Security in Alaska
- SNAP in Alaska
- SNAP Referrals and Service Insights
- Turning Service Insights to Action
- Summary of key takeaways
- Questions
**FOOD BANKS**
- Direct Food Distribution
- Connect Clients with other services and assistance programs
- Advocacy and Education

**FOOD SECURITY SOLUTIONS**
- Efficiency/Short Term Relief
- Substitution/Capacity Building
- Redesign Strategies
“The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food insecurity as the lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life.”
Who is hungry in Alaska?

1 in 7 Alaskan
(100,310)

1 in 5 Children
(34,690)
Hunger Statistics in Alaska

- 1/7 Alaskans faces Food Insecurity (~107,000)
- 1/5 Alaska kids live in homes that may not have enough food
- ~155,000 Alaskans access the Alaska Anti-Hunger Network Annually
- 60% of clients served at FBA and partner agencies worked for pay in the last 12 months
- 56% choose between paying for food or medical care
- 53% choose between food and housing
- 64% between food and transportation
- 59% between food and utilities
Why is this important?

- Hungry individuals are 2.9 times more likely to be in poor health
- Food insecurity and obesity are comorbid conditions
- Children who face food insecurity are likely to be sick more often, recover from illness more slowly, and be hospitalized more frequently
- Good nutrition can help reduce violent behavior in adults, link found between behavioral issues and certain nutritional deficiencies
- Hungry kids have a hard time concentrating, which can affect future success
Food Bank of Alaska’s role

- Food Distribution
- SNAP Outreach
- Advocacy & Community Education
Charitable Anti-Hunger System

The Food Bank of Alaska works across sectors in the food system to food access for low-income Alaskans.
What is SNAP?

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (also known as Food Stamps)
- Federal funded assistance program based on financial need
- Eligible persons/households are given an EBT (electronic benefit transfer) card, just like a debit card, with which to use their benefits at participating retailers/grocers
What can SNAP buy?

**SNAP CAN purchase:**
- Unprepared food items at a grocery store/retailer that accepts EBT
- Seeds used to grow food
- Subsistence equipment in rural communities

**SNAP CANNOT purchase:**
- Hot foods, prepared meals, or foods to be eaten in the store
- Non-food items (household supplies, clothing)
- Tobacco, drugs, alcohol
Alaska SNAP Facts!

- In a typical month in 2018, SNAP helped an average of 85,111 Alaskans.
- Nearly 25% of people eligible for SNAP are not receiving benefits.
- 20% of Alaska’s Children rely on SNAP.
- SNAP eases the burden on the anti-hunger network in Alaska, as well as individuals trying to meet their basic needs.
- SNAP is an incredible economic stimulator – every $5 of federal SNAP benefits generates nearly $9 in local economic activity. In 2018, SNAP benefits pumped about $175 million into Alaska’s economy.
SNAP has the potential to feed more families than all other feeding programs combined.
Alaska SNAP Outreach Program

GOAL: Provide Alaskans with information and assistance in applying for SNAP

- Serves statewide
- Call center with toll-free number
- Assistance via text
- Direct outreach at community events and distribution sites
- Application assistance and submission
- Website with screen tool
Why is Outreach Important

Many barriers exist!

Stigmas about “Food Stamps”

Overwhelming paperwork

Lack of knowledge about eligibility and the application process

Lack of time and transportation

Need for interpretation/translation services

Physical and cognitive disability
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Households assisted with the application process</td>
<td>997</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local economic impact</td>
<td>$3,740,174</td>
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<td>Individuals on SNAP in AK</td>
<td>86,969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals attributed to SNAP Outreach</td>
<td>607,440</td>
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SNAP Referrals

- Food Bank of Alaska’s SNAP Outreach Specialists can complete an application with a client in 15-20 minutes
- Clients can be referred to SNAP Outreach for technical questions about the program (i.e. ABAWD Work Requirements)
- SNAP Outreach Specialists have read-only access to the State’s EIS platform allowing them to perform case status managements
- Working with and referring potential SNAP participants to the SNAP Outreach team helps us gather service insights
Screen for Food Insecurity

Food Insecurity Screening Questions

1. “We worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.” Was that often true, sometimes true or never true for your household in the last 12 months?

2. “The food that we bought just didn’t last, and we didn’t have money to get more.” Was that often, sometimes or never true for your household in the last 12 months?

3. Do you make other compromises such as forgoing necessary clothing, household items, etc. in order to be able to afford food?

A response of “often true” or “sometimes true” to either question = positive screen for FI.

Why?

- Individuals may not know that they are food insecure or that there are resources available to help them.
- If you are not able to screen them yourself, try and find a way to connect them with someone who can – i.e. during vitals or with a case worker.
- Screening and connecting individuals and families with food resources is your best tool in helping to alleviate the cycle of poverty.
**Short term solutions:**

- food pantries
- meal programs
- summer meals for kids
- Knowledge Needs Nutrition (KNN)

**Longer term Solutions:**

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Women, Infants & Children (WIC)
Service Insights

- Client Surveys
- Client Stories
- Communication with State
- Insights from partner agencies and community groups
Turning Insights to Action

- SNAP Drug Felon Ban
- Advocating for more DPA Eligibility Technician Positions
- SNAP ABAWD Waiver
Other State Level Advocacy

- **State Budget**
  - Senior Benefits Campaign

- **SNAP Administrative Policies**
  - Electronic Application
  - Electronic/Telephonic Signature
  - Pre-Release Waiver
  - Elderly Simplified Application (ESAP)
  - Asset Limit & Transitional Benefits
In Summary...

What you can do!

1. Spread the word! (Get our materials!)
2. **Refer clients to us**
3. Schedule a time for us to do direct outreach at your site
4. Ask clients at intake if they are interested in getting information about SNAP
5. Have volunteers talk to clients about SNAP
6. Get volunteers trained on SNAP Outreach and application assistance
7. Become a fee agent (in certain rural areas)
Questions?

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Need Food?
Get SNAP!

Call: 907-222-3122
Toll-Free: 844-222-3119
Email: snap@foodbankofalaska.org

SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as food stamps) provides money on a Quest Card to buy food every month. We can help you apply, renew, or check your case status for SNAP!

Your household may qualify for assistance if your combined monthly income is at or below these amounts
Effective 10/1/2019 - 9/30/2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Size</th>
<th>Monthly Income (before taxes)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$1,690</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>$3,488</td>
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<tr>
<td>5+</td>
<td>$4,087+</td>
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Useful Reports

- Map the Meal Gap, 2019
- The Importance of Local Foods in Mitigating Poverty-Related Food Insecurity (report on rural hunger in Alaska), Burke & Durr
- We are in the beginning stages of planning a Hunger in Alaska Study for Fall 19/Spring 20