Woonsocket HEZ Food Access Plan

HEZ ANNUAL MEETING

Woonsocket, RI
March 31, 2016
Founded in 1990, KK&P is the nation’s leading problem-solver for food-related enterprises, programs and policies.

We don’t just innovate food systems. We drive sustainable growth.
Good food is good business.

**Food System Planning**
- Business plans
- Mapping and data visualization
- Funding strategies

**Supply Chain Strategies**
- Strategic and sustainable sourcing
- Local food procurement
- Retooling retail and manufacturing

**Business & Program Development**
- Concept development
- Market assessment and feasibility studies
- Strategic planning

**Recruiting & Performance Management**
- Organizational assessment
- Full-service recruitment
- Performance Management and team development

**Stakeholder Engagement**
- Partner identification
- Network development
- Facilitation

**Education & Events**
- Convening design and execution
- Experiential learning
- Curriculum and educational program development
Our Approach

- Needs Assessment
- Three-year plan
- Plan dissemination

Full food systems approach
Our Approach

The needs assessment includes:

- Review of key literature
- Mapping analysis
- Interviews with 18 key stakeholders
- Surveys and focus groups (over 350 participants)
**FINDINGS**

**Interview Themes**

- The city is disproportionately home to a population that lives in, or at the edge of, poverty and that experiences disproportionate incidence of diet-related health problems.

- With few grocery stores in the inner city, fresh produce is hard to come by and is often perceived to be unaffordable.

- Improved coordination and marketing of resources and services, along with more formalized collaboration among organizations, would maximize the impact of their efforts.

- Interviewees see improving access to information and skills around healthy food as a key component to improving community health.

- Economic development related to food is seen as a significant opportunity for the city, in terms of entrepreneurship, small business growth, and workforce development.
FINDINGS

Where people get food

98% of respondents do their primary grocery shopping at the major chain supermarkets in and around the city.
- Farmers’ market, food pantries, and family and friends were the three most common alternate methods of food access.

74.5% reported using some type of food assistance program

“I’d go to the food pantry before I’d go to the corner store [to buy food].”
**FINDINGS**

**Transportation**

**Most used transit methods**

- **My own car**: 68.5%
- **Getting a ride with someone I know**: 16.2%
- **RIPTA bus**: 7.4%
- **Walking**: 4.3%

Bar chart showing the percentage of primary, secondary, and tertiary methods used for transportation.
FINDINGS

Transportation

Most popular transportation method by age

- Walking
- Biking
- Taxi service
- RIPTA flex service
- RIPTA bus
- Getting a ride with someone I know
- My own car
FINDINGS

Transportation

Most popular transportation method by income

- Walking
- Biking
- Taxi service
- RIPTA flex service
- RIPTA bus
- Getting a ride with someone I know
- My own car

Income brackets:
- Less than $25,000
- $25,000-$50,000
- $50,000-$75,000
- over $75,000
FINDINGS

Food at home

75.6% reported that they, or someone in their household, cooks dinner at home every day.

Another 15.1% reported that they or someone in their household cooks dinner at home a few times per week.
**FINDINGS**

**Food Insecurity**

“Within the past 12 months, we worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.”

53% answered Yes

Of those that answered yes:
- 76% use SNAP
- 24% do not use SNAP

“Within the past 12 months, the food we bought just didn’t last and we didn’t have money to get more.”

43% answered Yes

Of those that answered yes:
- 84% use SNAP
- 16% do not use SNAP
### FINDINGS

#### Food Assistance

**Why don't you use social services you know about?**

- **Not sure if I'm eligible**: 62.0%
- **I don't like to ask for help**: 29.5%
- **I don't have transportation to get there**: 22.5%
- **Too much paperwork/too complicated**: 16.3%
- **I'm not available when these services are offered**: 16.3%
- **It takes too much time**: 7.0%

% of respondents to this question
Envisioning a Healthier Woonsocket

“What could change in Woonsocket that would make healthy foods easier to find, buy, and eat? This could be a new business, program, service, or something else. Think big and think creatively about what could make a healthier Woonsocket!”

28% of respondents want a more convenient grocery store

25% want more affordable healthy food

22% want more farm fresh food, farmers markets, or fresh food in corner stores

“I’m so disappointed in the fast food places, a sandwich is $1 and a salad is $4”
FINDINGS

Focus Group Themes

• Food access as one piece of a larger issue: vibrancy, economic opportunity, and sense of community in Woonsocket

• A place to gather around food—activities for youth, general supportive counseling, food activities and healthy food available, satisfying ways to engage with a project or work (for people of all ages) and see it through

• The focus group participants have solid understandings of how to prepare nutritious food, as well as which foods make up a healthy diet based on their personal and medical needs

• Concern about family and friends not using effective budgeting for grocery shopping

• General confusion about how SNAP is allocated
The Woonsocket Food Access Plan

A LEADING THEME
• A lack of “good” workforce opportunities in Woonsocket

FRAMEWORKS GUIDING THE PLAN
• Supporting broader economic opportunity in Woonsocket through increased food access

• Increasing community inclusion to dismantle stigma around food assistance

FOCAL POINTS FOR THESE STRATEGIES
• Infrastructure
• “Place”
• Information
• Integration of services
• Geography of food access
Strategy 1: Bring food to people, and bring people to food

- Contribute to city efforts to bring a grocery store or supermarket to central/downtown Woonsocket
- Research opportunities to co-locate a grocery store with a community health center
- Facilitate the creation of Woonsocket as a pilot site for grocery delivery services for SNAP shoppers
- Innovate with farmers’ market models and programs that create market outlets for farmers while minimizing the time farmers have to spend at market
THE PLAN

Strategy 2: Increase integration and promotion of existing assets and services

• Food-related education and skill-building: provide food, nutrition and budget skill-building opportunities that are customized and practical.

• Culinary medicine

• Incentivize healthy food purchases

• Support independent retailers interested in offering more healthy foods

• Build on network of emergency food providers to increase alignment/coordination of emergency food services
THE PLAN

Strategy 3: Create a community “headquarters” for food access, activities and information in central Woonsocket

- Community café, potentially with regular but limited work day hours and/or “community meal” events
- Kitchen and cold storage infrastructure to serve not just food business entrepreneurs, but food pantry recipients
- Youth programming - a place to go
- Office space for food-focused “anchor” organization or program
- Food transportation hub

IMMEDIATE OPPORTUNITY: Leverage NeighborWorks’ downtown real estate