



MEMBER PARTNERSHIP GUIDE

KEYS TO GREATER COLLABORATION AND IMPACT TO
BETTER THE LIVES OF OLDER ADULTS

SEPTEMBER 2016

MEMBER PARTNERSHIP GUIDE

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PARTNERSHIP GUIDE



FEEDING AMERICA AND MEALS ON WHEELS AMERICA ON-THE-GROUND

Feeding America food banks and Meals on Wheels America member senior nutrition programs share a common vision for every senior to have access to the food they need to stay healthy. Food banks and senior nutrition programs often have complementary strengths and strategies that make partnerships appealing and mutually beneficial. Feeding America and Meals on Wheels America studied successful examples of on-the-ground partnerships to determine challenges, lessons learned and keys to success. This guide contains a summary of these findings, guidance on how to partner, tips for successful partnerships, answers to questions that might arise through partnerships, and links to helpful resources.

By working together, we can solve senior hunger and ensure that one day every older adult has access to the food they need to stay healthy and strong.

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GUIDANCE AND PARAMETERS FOR WORKING TOGETHER



GET INTRODUCED

The first step is getting to know one another. Find contact information for the Meals on Wheels America member(s) in your community by typing in your zip code or searching by city and state:

mealsonwheelsamerica.org/signup/aboutmealsonwheels/find-programs.

Find contact information for the Feeding America food bank(s) in your community by typing in your zip code or searching by city and state: feedingamerica.org/foodbank.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW: MEALS ON WHEELS AMERICA AND FEEDING AMERICA MEALS ON WHEELS AMERICA PROGRAMS 101: HOW WE WORK

Meals on Wheels operates in virtually every community in America through our network of more than 5,000 independently-run local programs. Together, we galvanize the resources of local community organizations, businesses, donors, sponsors and more than two million volunteers – bolstered by supplemental funding from the Older Americans Act – into a national safety net for our seniors. Collectively Meals on Wheels America fight three of the biggest threats from aging (hunger, isolation, and safety), enabling seniors to stay in their own homes, where they want to be, by providing:

NUTRITIOUS MEAL



FRIENDLY VISITS



SAFETY CHECK



Learn more about [how meals on wheels programs and Meals on Wheels America work](#).

FEEDING AMERICA FOOD BANK NETWORK 101: HOW WE WORK



We Secure Donations
The Feeding America network secures donations from national and local retailers, food companies and government agencies.



We Move Food
The Feeding America network of food banks moves donated food and grocery products to where they are needed most.



We Safely Store and Distribute Donations
Member food banks ensure the safe storage and reliable distribution of donated goods to local charitable feeding programs.



We Serve People in Need
Food banks provide food, grocery items and hunger relief services to people in need at food pantries, soup kitchens, youth programs, senior centers, emergency shelters and other programs.

Learn more about [how food banks and the Feeding America network works](#).

EXAMPLES OF PARTNERSHIPS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

There are seven common examples of effective partnership models between Feeding America network food banks and Meals on Wheels



1. **MEAL PARTNERS:** Meals on Wheels member secures quality product donated from the Feeding America food bank to supplement their meal program.
 - *Example:* In Vermont, Meals on Wheels of Bennington Country receives about 70% of its food for meals from the Food Bank of Vermont.



2. **SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PARTNERS:** Feeding America food bank provides boxes or bags of food to be delivered to recipients as a supplement to Meals on Wheels meals.
 - *Example:* Northern Illinois Food Bank's Senior Box Program provides nutritious easy-to-prepare foods to seniors via Lifescape Community Services for persons who are capable of cooking, but lack access to food due to financial or functional challenges.



3. **FOOD PURCHASE PARTNERS:** Feeding America food bank purchases food; Meals on Wheels partner purchases or receives that food to be provided to recipients for free, optional donation or purchase.
 - *Note:* When partners cannot firmly guarantee a process that upholds IRS Code 170(e)(3), which applies only to donated product, Food Purchase Partners is a solid collaboration model.



4. **COMMUNITY COALITION PARTNERS:** Meals on Wheels and Feeding America food banks partner to make an impact for people in their community.
 - *Example:* Metropolitan Interfaith Association (MIFA) and Mid-South Food Bank in Memphis, Tennessee, are collaborating with area hospitals to quantify the impact of nutrition on senior health. In a pilot project they delivered healthy meals and food boxes to the homes of seniors after hospital stays.



5. **OUTREACH AND BENEFITS ASSISTANCE PARTNERS:** Meals on Wheels and Feeding America food banks partner to increase access to benefits for eligible clients.
 - *Example:* Two-thirds of Feeding America food banks offer SNAP Application Assistance, often in the form of direct volunteer assistance, a hotline or other localized outreach or assistance materials. These materials can be inserted into meal deliveries or volunteers could accompany delivery for an interested and eligible senior.



6. **ADVOCACY PARTNERS:** Meals on Wheels America, Feeding America and local affiliates partner to elevate the voices of the people we serve and advocate for policy solutions that strengthen federal nutrition assistance programs.
 - *Examples:* Older Americans Act protected and strengthened for congregate and home-delivered meals; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) strengthened access such as simplified applications; and Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) funding to expand program nationwide.



7. **INTEGRATION:** Feeding America food bank and Meals on Wheels member form one entity to meet community need.
 - *Example:* FeedMore, Inc. in Richmond, Virginia is both a Feeding America member food bank and a Meals on Wheels America member, and was created with the merger of the Central Virginia Food Bank and Meals on Wheels Serving Central Virginia.

MEALS ON WHEELS AMERICA FUNDING DIVERSITY

The Older Americans Act, the federal legislation that guides the administration and implementation of federal nutrition programs for older adults, states that seniors that participate in funded programs can contribute voluntarily to the programs if they so choose. (Reference: [Older Americans Act, Section 315](#) 'Voluntary contributions shall be allowed and may be solicited for all services for which funds are received under this Act if the method of solicitation is non-coercive. Such contributions shall be encouraged for individuals whose self-declared income is at or above 185 percent of the poverty line, at contribution levels based on the actual cost of services').

Meals on Wheels programs operate and are funded in diverse ways. Some are privately funded, and receive no federal funds at all, some are wholly federally funded, while still others utilize a mix of funding streams. Regardless, all programs allow seniors to contribute voluntarily to the programs to support the nutrition programs they participate in, such as Meals on Wheels. Those voluntary contributions are permitted on a sliding scale basis, based on the income of the participant. Many will not participate unless they can contribute. This approach is designed to ensure as many seniors that need services are provided for and that seniors can have a sense of dignity when participating in programs like Meals on Wheels. Programs like Meals on Wheels are not 'means-tested' – meaning that considering a person's assets and income as a basis for participation is prohibited.

IRS CODE 170(E)(3)

The largest area of caution for Feeding America food banks and Meals on Wheels programs is regarding the handling of donated product and ensuring that IRS Code 170(e)(3) ("Special Rule for the Deduction of Certain Charitable Contributions of Inventory and Other Property") is upheld.

This piece of tax code stipulates the processes and procedures that must be carried out by the Feeding America member or Meals on Wheels program in order for an in-kind food or product donor to qualify for an accelerated tax deduction. It also affords protection to a nonprofit of its tax-exempt status, which can be put at risk if the organization fails to follow a variety of statutes and regulations imposed by state or Federal government entities.

Because the IRS Code 170(e)(3) only applies to donated product, Feeding America food banks can allocate purchased food to utilize in preparing Meals on Wheels program meals without concern. Many food banks purchase product at bulk rates that they distribute through targeted distribution programs and to their partners. Meals on Wheels programs could also explore the possibility of buying purchased product from the food bank or coordinating bulk orders of product for their meal service.

Feeding America food banks may allocate donated food to supplement Meals on Wheels program distributions or to utilize in preparing Meals on Wheels program meals, provided that the donated product and meals containing donated product are indisputably provided to the recipient free of cost or for a truly optional and anonymous donation.

A donation from the recipient cannot be exchanged directly for meals provided. The focus of the IRS regulations is not so much on the concept of "receive" (meaning the receipt of monetary donations) as it is on the concept of "expectation of payment." Suggesting a donation amount is acceptable if no pressure is applied; clients must be able to make donations in an inconspicuous manner. It cannot be difficult or embarrassing to not contribute. One example of effectively and properly collecting anonymous donations is a deposit box at the program site or local community or senior center.

WAYS TO ENSURE IRS CODE 170(E)(3) IS UPHELD

When embarking upon a partnership to serve seniors in need, it is important to document details of roles and responsibilities for both parties through an agreement or memorandum of understanding (MOU). Feeding America food banks maintain program agreements with all program partners. The program agreement between the Vermont Foodbank and Meals on Wheels of Bennington County includes the following language to ensure IRS Code 170(e)(3) is upheld:

Network partners are encouraged to fundraise; however, they may not require donations in exchange for meals, product, or the delivery of food. There may not be any posting of signage that infers a suggested donation dollar amount near or as part of a product or meal distribution. Network partners may utilize contribution canisters, envelopes, or similar means of allowing clients to contribute to the program, provided that all contributions are truly voluntary and can be made in a completely anonymous way. Donated food cannot be used for fundraising events.

The food bank and senior meal site spent time talking about this requirement in detail. The food bank also provides all their program sites with a page from Feeding America's IRS Code 170(e)(3) Interpretive Guide, a copy of which is in the appendix of this document.

TIPS TO DEVELOP AND SUSTAIN A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP

- Create a shared vision – spend time planning
- Identify and address each partner's needs and expectations
- Identify, utilize and understand the strengths and role of each partner
- Outline roles and responsibilities in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Program Agreement signed by the leadership of each partner
- Take it slow – try a pilot program
- Facilitate continuous and transparent communication
- Designate a contact person from each organization or for each piece of the partnership
- Ensure each participant reserves sufficient dedicated time for the partnership
- Handle disagreements, disappointments and frustrations early
- Get the right people in the right seat
- Support the partnership's limitations

SUMMARY OF SUCCESSFUL CASE STUDY FINDINGS



Meals on Wheels America and Feeding America studied successful examples of on-the-ground partnerships to determine challenges, lessons learned and keys to success. This section contains a summary of these findings.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

Across several Feeding America and Meals on Wheels America member partnerships, three keys to success are: alignment of organizational goals, willingness and flexibility, and constant communication.

GOAL ALIGNMENT

- In one example, the Feeding America food bank has made an organizational commitment to distribute more produce and nutritious food. The Meals on Wheels member is also committed to providing more produce and nutritious food.
- In another, the Meals on Wheels program is located in the southern part of the state and has a broad distribution. The Feeding America food bank had prioritized increasing meals provided to people in need in that part of the state.

FLEXIBILITY AND WILLINGNESS

- Feeding America food banks often receive bulk amounts of product. Meals on Wheels programs often secure more food from food banks when they are adept at taking and working with almost any and all product the food bank has to offer—finding ways to innovate and plug foods into “ghost recipes” to make unique, nutritious and tasty meals.
 - » Some Meals on Wheels agencies leverage “ghost recipes,” approved flexible menus that they can plug various ingredients into and still meet nutritional requirements while providing interesting and appetizing meals to their clients.
- Many food banks and senior nutrition programs have a large variety of programs and services. In one case, when a Meals on Wheels program was able to leverage multiple offerings from the food bank, the food bank felt more incentivized to allocate more resources (food, funds and staff time) toward the partnership.

CONSTANT COMMUNICATION

- Partnership is easier when staff from both parties are regularly engaging – not only in matters directly related to the partnership, but also participating in and interacting at the same community meetings or other events.
- In one case, the director of the Meals on Wheels program communicates regularly and proactively with the Feeding America food bank, sharing what they want with distribution staff and inviting food bank drivers into their kitchen to see how the food they provide is used, additionally giving the driver ideas to share at their next “port of call.”

COMMON CHALLENGES

- Some Meals on Wheels programs lack storage space to accept all the produce and fresh food from the Feeding America food bank and local farmers. They additionally have limited staff. They believe volunteers could be leveraged to manage the fresh produce and prep meals, but training is intensive and space is limited.
- Funding is the lynch pin in terms of taking operations to the next level – funding mixes enables some Meals on Wheels programs to offer meals for an optional donation, which can regularly result in a net loss.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Most food banks offer ingredients, not packaged foods. The agency has built their business around knowing how to cook and be creative with ingredients – “to think and cook like an iron chef” by plugging diverse ingredients into approved “ghost recipes.” The partnership is made easier because both parties aim to think outside the box and push one another to do the same and try things differently.

NUTRITION EDUCATION

- [Senior Nutrition Guide](#) - This guide is designed to help program directors and staff of Senior Grocery Programs better understand how to address the nutritional needs of their older adult clients.
- [MyPlate for Older Adults](#) - This guide encourages older Americans to follow a healthy eating pattern bolstered by physical activity.
- [Updated MyPlate for Older Adults](#) - This guide (available in English, Spanish and Chinese) provides an updated approach for older adults to understand their nutrition and hydration needs, and offers tips for shopping, physical activity, etc.
- [Healthy recipes for emergency food assistance recipients](#) is available on the Healthy Food Bank Hub.
- [Updated Nutrition Facts Label](#) - This resource has been updated to reflect new scientific information, including the link between diet and chronic diseases such as obesity and heart disease, as well as to make it easier for consumers to make better informed food choices.

RELATED RESOURCES

- [Food Safety for Older Adults](#) - need-to-know guide to educate older adults about foodborne illness and food safety risks
- [Baby Boomers and Food Safety](#) - an infographic outlining risks, tips and tricks to keep foods safe (in English and Spanish)
- [Tips for Helping Older Adults Access SNAP](#) - best practices to assist older adults gain access to needed SNAP benefits
- [Close the Senior SNAP Gap](#) - only 41% of eligible seniors receive SNAP benefits
 - » [Senior SNAP gap state-level information](#) is available via the National Council on Aging (NCOA).

SENIOR HUNGER AND NUTRITION RESEARCH

- [Aging Statistics](#) - A compilation of data on older adults from a variety of sources, curated by the Administration on Aging, Administration for Community Living.
- [Baby Boomers and Beyond](#) - Facing Hunger After Fifty research from Feeding America
- [State of Senior Hunger in America](#) - Annual Report research by the National Foundation to End Senior Hunger (NFESH)
- [Spotlight on Senior Hunger](#) from Feeding America and NFESH
- [Spotlight on Senior Health](#) from Feeding America and NFESH
- [More than Meal Phase 1](#) research from Meals on Wheels America
- [Food Insecurity Among Older Adults research](#) from AARP Foundation
- [Hunger in America 2014 research](#) from Feeding America
- [Securing the Essentials: Findings on Nutrition Knowledge and Food Insecurity Among Older Adults](#) research from AARPF

- [State of Hispanic Older Adults](#) - An Analysis and Highlights from the Field research from the National Hispanic Council on Aging
- [Hunger and Nutrition in America](#) - What's at Stake for Children, Families, and Older Adults

FOOD BANK RESEARCH AND REPORTS

- [Nutrition-Focused Food Banking](#) - Institute of Medicine Discussion Paper
- [Banking on Health](#) - Improving Healthy Beverage & Nutrition Standards in Food Banks
- [Qualitative Study of Nutrition-Based Initiatives at Selected Food Banks in the Feeding America Network](#) research by multiple authors, peer-reviewed, published in the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

TRAINING

- [Collaborating to Solve Senior Hunger](#) - Meals on Wheels America and Feeding America Member training webinar
 - » Handout also [available](#)
- [Food Safety on the Go](#) - Food safety training for Meals on Wheels America drivers
- [Safe Food for Seniors Begins at Home](#) - An exploration of food safety risks specific to homebound seniors
- [Developing a food bank nutrition policy](#) - A guide to procure healthful foods
 - » Cost per enrollment: Free
 - » Nutrition Policy Institute, University of California

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



1

CAN MEALS ON WHEELS PROGRAMS IDENTIFY THEIR LOW-INCOME CLIENTS?

ANSWER

Programs that receive funding through the Older Americans Act (OAA) collect and record above and below federal poverty line income data for their clients. However, exact monthly/annual income levels are not required for eligibility. Clients self-report this information. If they receive other supportive services authorized by the OAA, a client may be asked to report their actual income level.

2

FROM A COMPETITIVE BUSINESS MODEL VIEW: HOW DO MEALS ON WHEELS AND FEEDING AMERICA PROGRAMS THAT BOTH CURRENTLY OR PROSPECTIVELY OFFER AND / OR COMPETE FOR CONGREGATE AND HOME DELIVERED MEAL (OAA) DOLLARS COHABITATE?

ANSWER

We are not aware of food banks and senior home-delivered or congregate programs directly competing for Older Americans Act (OAA) grant dollars distributed through OAA contracts. As resources at all levels of government are limited and the philanthropic and charitable donations are yet to rebound from the economic recession, we encourage local organizations to capitalize on the strengths of Feeding America food banks and Meals on Wheels programs, and resources that already exist within individual communities.

An emphasis on collaboration, coordination, avoiding duplication and leveraging shared innovations is key to addressing the growing problem of senior hunger across a continuum of need—not to mention an attractive approach to funders.

3

IS ANYTHING BEING DONE TO TRY TO AMEND IRS 170(E)(3)? MEALS ON WHEELS CANNOT PARTNER WITH FOOD BANKS IF THEY CHARGE OR DIRECTLY REQUEST DONATIONS FOR MEALS MADE FROM DONATED PRODUCT.

ANSWER

No, at this time no action is being taken to amend IRS Code 170(e)(3) (“Special Rule for the Deduction of Certain Charitable Contributions of Inventory and Other Property”), as it ultimately incentivizes donations and enables us to provide more good food to seniors in need. The fundamental concern is that food banks and senior nutrition programs must work together to build a partnership that ensures the code is upheld. This piece of tax code stipulates the processes and procedures that must be carried out by the Feeding America member and Meals on Wheels program in order for an in-kind donor to qualify for an accelerated tax deduction. It also affords protection to a nonprofit of its tax-exempt status, which can be put at risk if the organization fails to follow a variety of statutes and regulations imposed by state or Federal government entities.

However, because the IRS Code 170(e)(3) only applies to donated product, Feeding America food banks can provide Meals on Wheels programs with purchased food to utilize in preparing meals. Many food banks purchase product at bulk rates that they distribute through targeted distribution programs and to their agencies. Meals on Wheels programs could also explore the possibility of buying purchased product from the food bank or coordinating bulk orders of product for their meal service.

4

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SENIORS WHO ARE “FOOD INSECURE” AND SENIORS WHO “FACE THE THREAT OF HUNGER”?

ANSWER

Both terms are used to describe data collected through the Core Food Security Module (CFSM) piece of the Current Population Survey. Each December, the CFSM is administered by the U.S. Census Bureau as a supplement to the monthly Current Population Survey. Based on responses to the CFSM, the food security status of each household is assigned based on the number of food-insecure conditions reported.

Senior households who indicate that they had problems at times, or anxiety about, accessing adequate food, but the quality, variety, and quantity of their food intake were not substantially reduced, are classified as facing the threat of hunger or marginally food secure. Seniors who report 3 or more food-insecure conditions – meaning that they were at times unable to acquire adequate food for one or more household members because they had insufficient money and other resources for food – are classified as being food insecure.

Feeding America and Meals on Wheels America have different ways of messaging about senior hunger. In joint materials, such as this Collaborating to Solve Senior Hunger piece, we developed a joint response: In 2014, 5.7 million seniors age 60 and older experienced food insecurity, with 4.5 million more facing the threat of hunger—a total of 10.2 million seniors facing the threat of hunger.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the countless members of the Feeding America and Meals on Wheels America networks who shared details and perspective on their collaborative programs and partnerships. Special thanks to [Banner Olive Branch Senior Center](#) and [St. Mary's Food Bank](#) in Arizona, [Meals on Wheels of Bennington County](#) and [Vermont Foodbank](#), and [Mid-South Food Bank](#) and [MIFA - Metropolitan Inter-Faith Association](#) of Tennessee for their well-informed and critical input during the creation of this resource.

CONTACTS

For more information or to get in touch with any of the individuals or organizations highlighted in this case study, please contact:

- **Uche Akobundu**, Meals on Wheels America, Director of Project Management and Impact, at uche@mealsonwheelsamerica.org or 571.339.1629.
- **Emily Basten**, Feeding America, Senior Manager of Program Development, at ebasten@feedingamerica.org or 312.641.5379.

ABOUT FEEDING AMERICA

Feeding America is the nationwide network of 200 food banks that leads the fight against hunger in the United States. Together, we provide food to more than 46 million people, including 7 million seniors, through 60,000 food pantries and meal programs in communities across America. Feeding America also supports programs that improve food security among the people we serve; educates the public about the problem of hunger; and advocates for legislation that protects people from going hungry. Individuals, charities, businesses and government all have a role in ending hunger. Donate. Volunteer. Advocate. Educate. Together we can solve hunger. Visit www.feedingamerica.org, find us on [Facebook](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#).

ABOUT MEALS ON WHEELS

Meals on Wheels America is the oldest and largest national organization supporting the more than 5,000 community-based senior nutrition programs across the country that are dedicated to addressing senior isolation and hunger. This network exists in virtually every community in America and, along with more than two million volunteers, delivers the nutritious meals, friendly visits and safety checks that enable America's seniors to live nourished lives with independence and dignity. By providing funding, leadership, education and advocacy support, Meals on Wheels America empowers its local member programs to strengthen their communities, one senior at a time. For more information, or to locate a local Meals on Wheels program, visit www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org.

APPENDICES



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PROMISING PRACTICES CASE STUDIES
APPENDIX B: IRS CODE 170 (E)(3)

PROMISING PRACTICE CASE STUDY #1

These four promising practice case studies between Meals on Wheels America Members and Feeding America food banks were captured in spring 2015.

1. FOOD BANK AND MEALS ON WHEELS PROGRAM INFORMATION

WHO: MEALS ON WHEELS OF BENNINGTON COUNTY AND VERMONT FOODBANK

WHERE: VERMONT

WHAT: SENIOR NUTRITION COLLABORATION

BACKGROUND

With the help of grants and support from the Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging, Meals on Wheels of Bennington County was able to build a new kitchen and a dining room: the Bennington Café. Most meals served are made from donated food.

This past year the program received nearly 30,000 pounds of food through the Vermont Foodbank, which helped Meals on Wheels of Bennington County reduce its food budget and offer more meals to the community. Meals on Wheels of Bennington County provides nearly 50,000 meals to over 60 and disabled individuals annually.

2. BEST PRACTICE PROFILE

2.1. OVERVIEW

Meals on Wheels of Bennington County provides nutritious, high quality meals that support the health and independence of those over 60 and the disabled in the Bennington county community. Their service offers nutritional and social benefits for both the active and homebound through two tiers of meal service: Home Delivery and Community Meal Sites.

As Vermont's largest hunger-relief organization, the Vermont Foodbank provides assistance to as many as 153,000 Vermonters each year through a state-wide network of 225 food pantries and meal programs. Meals on Wheels of Bennington County is one of the larger and more robust agencies of the Vermont Foodbank, meaning the agency takes advantage of many of the resources available through the food bank in addition to pure food distribution, which this food bank appreciates.

2.2. LOGISTICS

The food bank delivers food to the agency twice a month, although staff from the food bank and agency interact more frequently than this through conversations about ordering food and joint participation in community initiatives.

3. BEST PRACTICE LEARNINGS

3.1. CHALLENGES

- This agency lacks storage space to accept all the produce and fresh food from the food bank and local farmers. They additionally have limited dedicated staff. They believe volunteers could be leveraged to manage the fresh produce and prep meals, but training is intensive and space is limited.
- Funding is the lynch pin in terms of taking agency operations to the next level – this Meals on Wheels agency's funding mix enables them to offer meals for an optional donation. They receive an average of \$0.75 per meal, which results in a net loss.

3.2. LESSONS LEARNED

The food bank doesn't offer packaged food but ingredients. The agency has built their business around knowing how to cook and be creative with ingredients – “to think and cook like an iron chef.” The partnership is made easier because both parties aim to think outside the box and push one another to do the same and try things differently.

- » The Meals on Wheels agency has developed “ghost recipes” approved flexible menus that they can plug various ingredients into and still meet nutritional requirements while providing interesting and appetizing meals to their clients.

3.3. KEYS TO SUCCESS

In this partnership, three keys to success are alignment of organizational goals, willingness and flexibility, and constant communication.

GOAL ALIGNMENT

- The Feeding America food bank has made an organizational commitment to distribute more produce and nutritious food. The Meals on Wheels agency is also committed to providing more produce and nutritious food.
- The agency is located in the southern part of the state, the food bank wants to increase meals provided to people in need in that part of the state.

FLEXIBILITY AND WILLINGNESS

- The Meals on Wheels agency is really good at taking almost any and all product the Feeding America food bank has to offer—finding ways to innovate and plug foods into “ghost recipes” to make unique, nutritious and tasty meals.
- Meals on Wheels agency has a balanced staff – one individual has a background as a high end chef and one has a background creating meals in mass.

CONSTANT COMMUNICATION

- Staff from both parties participate in and interact at the same community meetings.
- The director of the Meals on Wheels agency communicates regularly and proactively with the Feeding America food bank, sharing what they want with distribution staff and inviting food bank drivers into their kitchen to see how the food they provide is used, additionally giving the driver ideas to share at their next “port of call.”

4. FOR MORE INFORMATION

FOOD BANK WEBSITE www.vtfoodbank.org

FOOD BANK PHONE 800.585.2265

FOOD BANK EMAIL cmeehan@vtfoodbank.org

PROGRAM CONTACT Chris Meehan, Chief Community Impact Officer

MEALS ON WHEELS WEBSITE mowbennington.org

MEALS ON WHEELS PHONE 802.442.8012

MEALS ON WHEELS EMAIL bcmow@BCMP.comcastbiz.net

PROGRAM CONTACT Susan Fox, Executive Director

PROMISING PRACTICE CASE STUDY #2

1. FOOD BANK AND MEALS ON WHEELS PROGRAM INFORMATION

WHO: ST. MARY'S FOOD BANK AND BANNER OLIVE BRANCH

WHERE: ARIZONA

WHAT: GLEANING AND GROCERY RESCUE PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

The collaboration between St. Mary's Food Bank and Banner Olive Branch Senior Center started in the early 1990s and has been ongoing for almost 20 years. The impetus to work in partnership to glean foods from area stores and schools was born out of a shared commitment of service to the residents of Sun City, Arizona.

Banner Olive Branch Senior Center's mission is to improve the quality of life for seniors and baby boomers by promoting independence and self-sufficiency, and has been in service to the community for the past 25 years. Founded in 1967, St. Mary's Food Alliance has the unique distinction of being the world's first food bank and today is one of the largest food banks in the United States.

2. BEST PRACTICE PROFILE

2.1. OVERVIEW

Banner Olive Branch Senior Center's mission is to improve the quality of life for seniors and baby boomers by promoting independence and self-sufficiency, and has been in service to the community for the past 25 years. Founded in 1967, St. Mary's Food Alliance has the unique distinction of being the world's first food bank and today is one of the largest food banks in the United States.

2.2. LOGISTICS

St. Mary's does the initial outreach and engagement of the participating stores and schools, and the Banner Olive Branch Center supplies the volunteers and vehicles to facilitate the gleaning. The program operates weekday mornings (from 6:30am – 10:30am). Volunteers report to the Receiving departments of each store and pick up donated items (food and other products). In addition, volunteers speak to individual managers of every department of the store (Dairy, Deli, etc.) to secure additional product if available. The foods are then transported by refrigerated truck back at the Center for sorting, distribution or meal preparation. Any food waste identified is donated to local farmers.

Banner Olive Branch then reports back the data on the produce and grocery items procured to St. Mary's.

2.3. STAFFING / VOLUNTEERS

Paid staff at St. Mary's Food Bank are tasked with initiating and cultivating relationships with local stores and schools, and glean from each participating site. Only top collaborators with St. Mary's are allowed to glean directly from participating sites.

At Banner Olive Branch Senior Center, the gleaning initiative engages 20-25 volunteers and staff (including the pantry supervisor and chef). Together, they provide needed volunteer management and food supervision expertise to ensure that this initiative runs smoothly. At present, the average age is 77 (this may change as younger volunteers (60 years of age) are increasingly showing an interest in supporting this initiative).

2.4. PARTNERSHIPS

Current partners include the United Way (via the Initiative to End Hunger), Maricopa County and AAA – all provide funding that enables Banner Olive to operate and fund the program.

2.5. FUNDING / RESOURCES

Volunteers serve as the core of the program's operation. Funding is unclear, however, 5,000 pounds of food and other products (paper and health and beauty items) per day are gleaned, saving Banner Olive Branch roughly \$80,000 (note: their food costs run about \$1.00 - \$1.00 per meal).

2.6. FOOD / SUPPLIES

Banner Olive Branch is responsible for providing volunteers who will drive to participating organization, glean food, health and beauty items, and other products, and return to the Pantry for packaging and distribution. The food items gleaned are used to make meals consumed at the Senior Center, and are also distributed to seniors via the Brown Bag program.

2.7. OUTREACH / PROMOTION

Banner Olive Branch Senior Center promotes the program through various channels in the local community. These include the local homeowners association newcomer event and health fairs, and as well as direct targeting of caseworkers and social workers within the Banner Health system. In addition, the Senior Center menu calendar is published in the local paper each week.

3. BEST PRACTICE LEARNINGS

3.1. CHALLENGES

America's Second Harvest pick up policy was deemed a hindrance. However, this challenge has negated following advent of new leadership and new policies at Feeding America.

3.2. SUCCESSES

Banner Olive Branch Senior Center has 2 refrigerated insulated trucks (for a total of 4-5 trucks) – liable for food waste if something happens. Staff at Banner Olive Branch Senior Center is always able to pick up food as scheduled so that there is limited waste. The Center is well-known in the community for running the Gleaning and Grocery initiative and it is widely considered to be a long standing, successful, well-coordinated program.

Another key area of success is the Center's ability to offer nutritious, fresh senior center meals – different than foods traditionally served as senior centers. The meals served at the Center are made fresh every day, presented in an appetizing way every day, through a program that engages volunteers (many of whom are seniors themselves) while providing them a sense of deep purpose.

The opportunity to participate in this gleaning initiative effectively saves money for the Center – and as a result the Center reports one of the lowest food costs in the local area.

St. Mary's considers this initiative a success because participating stores and schools report low levels of food waste. Foods set aside for gleaning are always picked up by Banner Olive Branch Senior Center staff consistently, as scheduled. St. Mary's staff now provide additional program offerings at the Center (Nutrition Bingo), because the gleaning initiative has been so mutually beneficial.

3.3. LESSONS LEARNED

Feeding America food banks and meals on wheels programs are encouraged to collaborate and follow the St. Mary's / Banner Olive Branch Senior Center model. Key ingredients are to identify if such a collaboration can meet the needs of seniors, implement a partnership and continue to grow the program, leveraging early successes.

3.4. KEYS TO SUCCESS

In this partnership, three keys to success are alignment of organizational goals, willingness and flexibility, and constant communication.

FLEXIBILITY AND WILLINGNESS

- St. Mary's is able to engage multiple stores and schools to participate in the Gleaning and Grocery program, which provides ample opportunity for partnering agencies, like Banner Olive Branch Senior Center, to glean from and secure sufficient food to meet client needs.
- The long-standing relationship between St. Mary's and Banner Olive Branch Senior Center has resulted in each organization having a great deal of trust and as a consequence, a productive working relationship.

GOAL ALIGNMENT

- The Feeding America food bank has made an organizational commitment to distribute more produce and nutritious food. The Meals on Wheels agency is also committed to providing more produce and nutritious food.
- The agency is located in the southern part of the state and the food bank wants to increase meals provided to people in need in that part of the state.

TECHNICAL KNOW HOW

- Banner Olive Branch Senior Center is able to creatively leverage the gleaned food items for use at the Senior Center every day through the exemplary culinary skills and food resource management of Chef Doru. Without it, the Center would find it difficult to incorporate gleaned items into its daily senior center menu.

4. FOR MORE INFORMATION

FOOD BANK WEBSITE www.firstfoodbank.org

FOOD BANK PHONE 602.343.3180

FOOD BANK EMAIL kxmendoza@firstfoodbank.org

PROGRAM CONTACT Kris Mendoza

MEALS ON WHEELS WEBSITE www.bannerhealth.com/locations/sun-city/banner-olive-branch-senior-center

MEALS ON WHEELS PHONE 623.465.6000

MEALS ON WHEELS EMAIL Ivy.Glinski@bannerhealth.com

PROGRAM CONTACT Ivy Glinski

PROMISING PRACTICE CASE STUDY #3

1. FOOD BANK AND MEALS ON WHEELS PROGRAM INFORMATION

WHO: MID-SOUTH FOOD BANK AND METROPOLITAN INTERFAITH ASSOCIATION (MIFA)

WHERE: MEMPHIS TENNESSEE

WHAT: NO HUNGRY SENIOR

BACKGROUND

No Hungry Senior (NHS) is a collaboration led by the Metropolitan Inter-Faith Association (MIFA) in partnership with the Aging Commission of the Mid-South (ACMS), Mid-South Food Bank, Catholic Charities of West Tennessee, the Memphis Jewish Federation, the Common Table Health Alliance, Baptist Memorial Health Care, and Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare. This initiative targets the Shelby County, Tennessee – a largely underserved area by MIFA – and targets needed resources to address the high concentration of food insecure seniors in this area, particularly those at greatest risk due to illness, disability, and lack of access to food.

2. BEST PRACTICE PROFILE

2.1. OVERVIEW

The No Hungry Senior program will target those clients who are homebound, recently discharged from hospitals, or particularly challenged by a lack of transportation. To do so, the agencies participating will collaborate to 1) coordinate client identification, client assessment, and referrals; 2) increase the number of individuals served through a variety of nutrition interventions while avoiding duplication; 3) measure outcomes and evaluate the program’s success; and 4) respond to measured outcomes warranting programmatic changes.

The 20-week program called Senior Nutrition Collaboration will serve 25 seniors over age 60, who are nutritionally at-risk due to illness or disability. Mid-South Food Bank will provide boxes of nutritious foods to accompany seniors home following hospital discharge, coupled with nutrition and health information on important topics such as diabetes, high blood pressure and calcium deficiency. MIFA will support this collaboration by assisting with home meal delivery and engaging staff drivers to observe and track the well-being of the seniors participating in the Collaborative.

2.2. LOGISTICS

Mid-South Food Bank and MIFA are collaborating with area hospitals (Methodist and Baptist Hospitals) to quantify the impact of nutrition on senior health. Older adults will be assessed for health, social and nutrition service needs upon discharge from these hospitals by care transition specialists, and then discharged home with a prepared food grocery box, inclusive of shelf stable items – based on their functional ability to cook and prepare meals. Social workers at Jewish Family Services will identify seniors who need kosher home-delivered meals. Regardless of dietary need, seniors who are able to cook will receive home-delivered boxes of grocery items, while those who can only do light food preparation will receive a home-delivered box of easy to prepare foods and snacks. Seniors who are frail at discharge will just receive home-delivered meals, and a daily visit by a social worker.

2.3. STAFFING / VOLUNTEERS

Dedicated project staff include staff members at MIFA and at Mid-South Food Bank, in addition to external support staff (i.e., social workers). A cadre of 25-40 volunteers assist in packing food boxes and 50-75 volunteers assist with home-delivery of meals. Other members of the community, such as elected officials and local sororities, also provide intermittent support for the Senior Nutrition Collaboration by assisting with meal packing.

2.4. PARTNERSHIPS

The Senior Nutrition Collaboration itself is a unique multi-agency collaboration between the Mid-South Food Bank, MIFA, the Plow Foundation, University of Memphis, Jewish Federation, Catholic Charities, local Aging Commission, and CoActionNet (a local software company).

2.5. FUNDING / RESOURCES

Funding for the No Hungry Senior initiative was obtained by the Wal-Mart Foundation, the H. W. Durham Foundation, the Plow Foundation and the Jewish Federations.

Other resources include dedicated staff at MIFA and Mid-South Food Bank, and volunteers from both organizations.

2.6. FOOD / SUPPLIES

Multiple partners within the Senior Nutrition Collaborative have responsibility for providing food supplies to the participating seniors. MIFA is responsible for producing hot meals, providing volunteers who will package the foods boxes and delivering hot meals, the Mid-South Food Bank is responsible for sourcing the foods facilitating ordering, and Catholic Charities recruits volunteers to deliver meals on Saturdays as well as some weekday routes. Home-delivered meals, weekly shelf stable meals and a monthly 22 pound grocery box are the food offerings available to seniors.

2.7. OUTREACH / PROMOTION

MIFA engaged in a limited outreach and promotion approach for the No Hungry Senior project to ensure that sufficient resources were available to manage those seeking to participate in the No Hungry Senior initiative. The target population is vulnerable seniors and it was felt that there would be a great need for this program.

Going forward, a volunteer recruitment plan is being developed to mobilize and engage volunteers now that the initiative is under way. Key media channels include local print and social media, particular in the youth and faith-based communities.

3. BEST PRACTICE LEARNINGS

3.1. CHALLENGES

Staff at Mid-South Food Bank and MIFA identified several areas of challenge including frequent duplication of services, food waste (sometimes foods distributed were found to be too much for seniors to consume), difficulty sourcing sufficient amounts and high cost of target foods (low salt, low sugar, etc) – these foods are harder to find, more expensive than regular foods, and take longer to source these foods via the Food Bank.

Other challenges noted included the lack of dedicated staff at collaborating agencies such that during the planning stages, each meeting featured a different group of representatives. This hampered decision-making and project implementation.

3.2. SUCCESSES

In this partnership, keys to success include leveraging the strengths of a robust group of collaborators – funders, software developers, as well as food bank and food delivery professionals. Other aspects of the initiative's success included regular meetings with project partners and a long planning period (6 months) so that all aspects of the project implementation could be considered and addressed.

A major component of the program's success is the alignment of the partner organizations on the mission of the No Hungry Senior initiative. With funds becoming increasingly limited, the opportunity to leverage resources and expertise for greater impact is vital.

Another component to the program's success is the establishment of a Saturday route for the delivery shelf stable food – an important approach to expanding service and engaging new volunteer audiences not traditionally available during the weekends (i.e., families, younger volunteers, corporations).

3.3. LESSONS LEARNED

The target population for the No Hungry Senior initiative ended being more frail, older and isolated than originally anticipated so this limited the need for all three food options – only the home-delivered and weekly delivery meals have been of interest to seniors to date. The least expensive option, the monthly grocery box delivery, has not been of interest to many participants or, due to their degree of vulnerability and isolation, they had need for daily or weekly food delivery.

Schedule monthly meeting with partners, stay in touch in between meetings and offer aid and assistance. It's important to meet with all partners in the room, so that you can share successes and challenges, limit opportunity to have silos and increase understanding amongst all parties.

3.4. KEYS TO SUCCESS

Two key areas were identified as important to the success of the No Hungry Senior initiative. These included:

- Willingness to partner to form a diverse coalition, allowing each partner to contribute towards the collaborative in the areas of their strength and expertise.
- Frequent and sustained communications with project partners in the form of monthly meetings and interim updates to ensure all are aware of what is happening, what successes are being achieved as well as what the barriers are to meeting project goals.

4. FOR MORE INFORMATION

FOOD BANK WEBSITE www.midsouthfoodbank.org

FOOD BANK PHONE 901.405.0072

FOOD BANK EMAIL EGreer@midsouthfoodbank.org

PROGRAM CONTACT Estella Mayhue-Greer, President/CEO

MEALS ON WHEELS WEBSITE www.mifa.org

MEALS ON WHEELS PHONE 901.527.0208

MEALS ON WHEELS EMAIL tljones@mifa.org

PROGRAM CONTACT Trina Jones, Project Director

PROMISING PRACTICE CASE STUDY #4

1. FOOD BANK AND MEALS ON WHEELS PROGRAM INFORMATION

WHO: MEALS ON WHEELS PLUS OF MANATEE

WHERE: BRADENTON, FLORIDA

WHAT: MEALS ON WHEELS PLUS

BACKGROUND

Founded in 1972 to provide nutritious, hot lunches to resident seniors in need, the Meals on Wheels program expanded to become so much more as is indicated by the “Plus” in their name. In response to community needs, services now offered through the program include:

- Adult Day Care
- Congregate Meals
- Health Monitoring
- Outreach
- Senior Enrichment Center
- Senior Wheels (transportation service)
- Volunteer Services
- Food Bank of Manatee

These programs offer a complete package of recreational, social, learning and health/nutrition care for the seniors of Manatee County. In addition, Meals on Wheels Plus of Manatee also operates the Food Bank of Manatee.

2. BEST PRACTICE PROFILE

2.1. OVERVIEW

The Meals on Wheels PLUS program coordinates a variety of services for seniors besides home-delivered meals designed to engage and enrich their lives, as well as provide assistance in key areas such as transportation. Their mission is to “assist individuals to live independently by providing nutritious and caring supportive services.” The program has received a prestigious four star rating from Charity Navigator (American’s largest and most utilized independent evaluator of charities). Below is a brief description of the “Plus” programs.

DAY CARE – the Daybreak Adult Day Care Center seeks to provide significant social and health benefits through activities, meals and structured, therapeutic programs.

SENIOR ENRICHMENT CENTER – housed in Renaissance on 9th a catering/banquet facility, that is operated by Meals on Wheels Plus, the center offers recreational, cultural and educational programs. One such program, the Senior Lunch Club, offers lunch and discussions led by a different speaker on a variety of topics each week. There is a small fee associated with the Senior Lunch Club. In addition, health seminars/screenings are held in partnership with the Senior Advantage Program at Manatee Memorial Hospital.

SENIOR WHEELS – provides door to door transportation for members and assistance if needed. There is a small fee for an annual membership plus transit fees; however, gift certificates are available.

2.2. LOGISTICS

- Meals on Wheels Plus of Manatee prepares all home-delivered and congregate meals in its own kitchen facility by its own staff/volunteers. Oversight is provided by a Registered Dietician.
- The program owns three vehicles and works with Manatee County, the Department of Transportation, Feeding America and Walmart to provide transportation to seniors via Senior Wheels.
- The Adult Daybreak Center is housed in a building in Lakewood Ranch in eastern Manatee County that was formerly a child care center. The 6,600 square foot building was purchased in 2015 and is licensed for 100 clients.
- Renaissance on 9th is a 25,000 square foot building (formerly a Winn-Dixie grocery store) that is owned and operated by Meals on Wheels Plus of Manatee. In addition to housing congregate meals, the Senior Lunch Club and other senior enrichment programs, the facility also has a bistro open to the public and a 325 seat ballroom which can be rented.

2.3. STAFFING / VOLUNTEERS

Meals on Wheels Plus employs 61 full time staff members and 17 part-time staff members. 400 volunteers currently donate their time. The program also operates a Speakers Bureau whereby volunteers can speak to seniors on a variety of topics.

2.4. PARTNERSHIPS

Because a variety of programs fall under the umbrella of Meals on Wheels Plus, there are partnerships on many levels. Operating as the Food Bank of Manatee, the program partners with local food pantries to distribute food to needy families. As a transportation service, the program partners with Manatee County, the Department of Transportation, Walmart and Feeding America to provide vehicles. The Senior Advantage Program at Manatee Memorial Hospital is a provider of health screenings/monitoring. There are, of course, many corporate partnerships that provide support, including the Herald Tribune, Walgreens, United Way and the Manatee Community Foundation to name a few. While the program could not survive without strategic partnerships, the program is unique in that it generates revenue from its catering/banquet facilities and bistro.

2.5. FUNDING / RESOURCES

35% of funding is provided by the government and 65% is provided through private/corporate donations and/or in-kind revenue. \$0.95 of every dollar goes back into the program. Two major special events, "Tropical Nights" and "Empty Bowls" are held annually and generated approximately 3% of revenue in 2014. Other sources of revenue from Renaissance on 9th and the Grandma's Goodies (cookies for purchase) program accounted for approximately 7% of revenue in 2014.

2.6. FOOD / SUPPLIES

Food ordering and preparation are performed in-house. Equipment and supplies needed for food preparation are owned by Meals on Wheels Plus and listed as depreciated assets on its balance sheet.

2.7. OUTREACH / PROMOTION

Through its fund-raising events and speakers bureau, Meals on Wheels Plus promotes its programs and volunteer recruitment. They also work with print media such as the Herald Tribune and Bay Area News, as well as social media. In addition, the public is reached through the Renaissance on 9th bistro.

Partnerships with Manatee County and the Manatee Memorial Hospital also raise awareness.

3. BEST PRACTICE LEARNINGS

3.1. CHALLENGES

Because Meals on Wheels Plus of Manatee is such a large organization encompassing many different programs, there is often a shortage of volunteers. When this occurs, paid staff have to fill the gap; thereby neglecting their own duties.

Another challenge to such a large organization with multiple assets is the maintenance of those assets. Vehicular, equipment and building maintenance require time and staff. Operating an adult daycare and banquet facility also requires time, staff and expertise.

3.2. SUCCESSES

There is virtually no waitlist. 100% of seniors who requested home-delivered meals received them. Case managers are assigned to perform an initial evaluation of a client requesting home-delivered meal service. The same case manager then provides periodic contact and follow-up.

3.3. KEYS TO SUCCESS

Receiving consistent feedback via member and stakeholder surveys is important to the program's success.

4. FOR MORE INFORMATION

MEALS ON WHEELS PLUS WEBSITE www.mealsonwheels.org

MEALS ON WHEELS PLUS PHONE 941.747.4655

MEALS ON WHEELS PLUS EMAIL info@mealsonwheelsplus.org

PROGRAM CONTACT Maribeth Phillips, CEO/Executive Director

FEEDING AMERICA IRS CODE 170(E)(3) INTERPRETIVE GUIDE

[Agency Eligibility]

19. VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Members may distribute donated products to agencies that utilize contribution canisters, envelopes, or similar means of allowing clients to contribute to the program, provided that all contributions are truly voluntary and can be made in a completely anonymous way.

GUIDELINES: The key factors are: Anonymous and truly Voluntary. The focus of the IRS regulations is not so much on the concept of “receive” (meaning the receipt of monetary donations) as it is on the concept of “expectation of payment”. Suggesting a donation amount is also acceptable if no pressure is applied; clients must be able to make their donations in an inconspicuous manner. These contributions are not payment for the food received if the above conditions are met. Circumstances cannot, however, be such that it is difficult or embarrassing to not contribute. In the case of the additional distribution of supplemental purchased products, suggested donations for donated products must be clearly separate from the collection of money covering purchased food costs. It is incumbent upon the member to assure, through its agency monitoring program, that the conditions outlined above are maintained. Agencies can neither keep records of which clients contribute, nor prohibit or discourage participation based on a client’s nonpayment

In monitoring, members should make every effort to determine that the suggested donation, in addition to being anonymous and voluntary, is reasonable.