

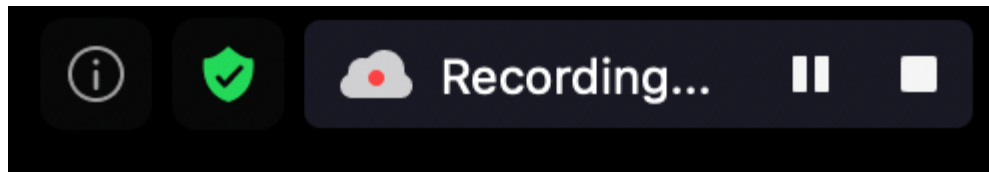


Nutrition Policies at Food Pantries: Learnings from Washington State

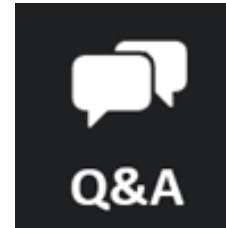
March 12th, 2025

A few technical notes:

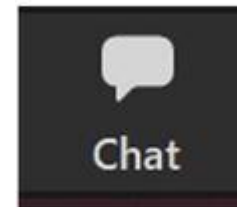
Today's webinar will be recorded!



Slides and recording will be emailed to all registrants



Please put all questions in the Q&A box



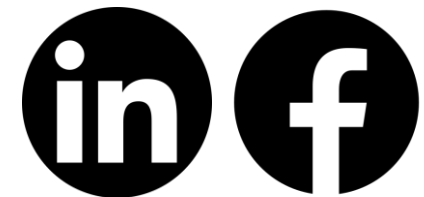
Chat messages will only go to panelists



Because it takes more than food to end hunger

We advance organizational and systems change in the charitable food network to ensure people have economic and nutrition security.

Visit www.ittakesmorethanfood.org to:



Sign up for our newsletter | Contact us | View upcoming events & new resources

Our Team



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(she/her)
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Senior Project Manager



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(she/her)
Communications Specialist

Who is in the room today?



Which of the following best describes the organization you're representing today?

- Regional food bank
- Local food pantry
- Academic / research organization
- Government organization
- Other community organization

Today's Panelists



Elena O'Callahan, RDN (she/her)

Community Impact Director
American Heart Association



Dana Cordy, MPH, RDN (she/her)

Nutrition Consultant



Trish Twomey

Executive Director
Washington Food Coalition



Chantal Brooks

Food Safety Manager & Nonprofit Administrator
New Day Ministry



Community Impact

The American Heart Association is committed to **reducing health disparities** by addressing systemic inequities that affect heart and brain health.

Our collaboration with **clinical and community-based organizations** mobilize solutions from within, enabling improved systems and resources to **sustainably impact health outcomes**.

Our **research-informed approach** strengthens systems of care to identify and manage high blood pressure, enhance CPR response, combat tobacco and e-cigarette use **and increase access to nutritious, culturally relevant foods**.

2028 Impact Goal

Building on over 100 years of trusted leadership in cardiovascular and brain health, by 2028, the American Heart Association will drive breakthroughs and implement proven solutions in science, policy and care for healthier people and communities. The greatest discoveries in health must reach people where they are.

Health Pillars

Health Factors

Improve control in blood pressure and other factors, including nutrition security and tobacco and e-cigarette preventions.

Quality of Care

Increase awareness, prevention, and management of cardiovascular risk factors by encouraging health care organizations to participate in the American Heart Association's primary care initiatives.

CPR Response

Build capacity to address out-of-hospital cardiac arrest in communities with lower rates of survival through CPR policies and programs.

Washington Food Coalition



- The Washington Food Coalition is a 32-year-old, statewide membership coalition, representing over 350 hunger relief organizations, including food pantries, food banks, meal programs and other partner agencies.
- **Peer driven** – board members are elected by WFC members in 14 districts around the state. Six At-Large members.
- Our purpose is to **actively educate and network** with organizations that strive to alleviate hunger throughout Washington State.
- We accomplish that by offering monthly trainings, weekly, monthly and quarterly newsletters, online resources, resource manuals, online self-directed learning and an annual conference.

AHA & WFC - Developing Nutrition Policies

Provide **one-on-one support** to develop a policy **outlining the role of nutrition** in procurement and distribution practices. Aligns with nationally-recognized, **evidence-based nutrition frameworks** while also being **tailored to the values of the organization and needs of their clients**.

Process often includes:

- Understanding the organization's nutrition goals
- Collecting input from team members, clients and other stakeholders
- Analyzing current procurement/distribution practices and inventory
- Setting SMART goals
- Creating supporting materials (i.e. donor guide)
- Policy approval and implementation

AHA/WFC offer:

- Experience crafting language and integrating evidence-based guidelines with organization's values
- Customizable templates (surveys, donor guides) to help craft and communicate the policy
- Implementation support such as staff/volunteer orientation, survey administration
- Nutrition education materials, training and support
- Access to our extensive network of local community partners, external funding opportunities
- **possibly**, Funding to cover for nutrition policy efforts, translation/printing costs

Project Goals

- **Process evaluation** – to understand the process for creating, implementing and sustaining nutrition policies
- **Impact evaluation** – to measure the impact of nutrition policies on food inventory, staff/volunteer experience and funding opportunities



Mixed Methods



Feedback from over 60 charitable food organizations and key stakeholders who partner with the WFC or AHA:

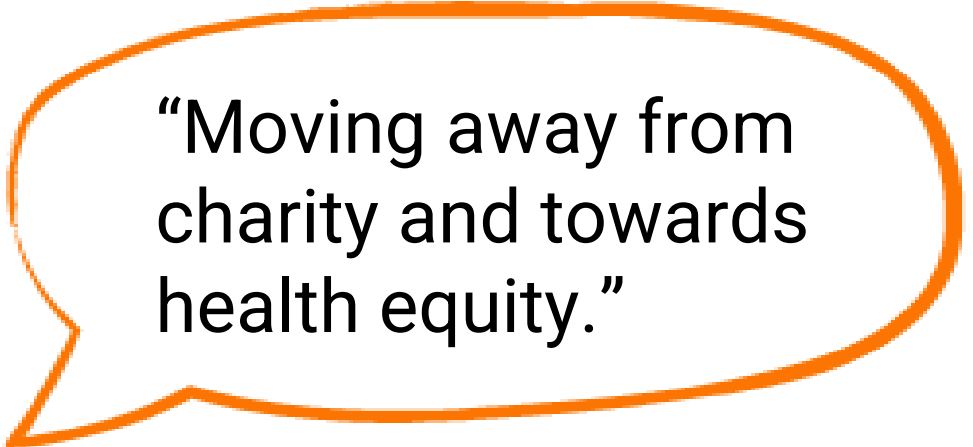
- Review of 31 food pantry nutrition policies
- Surveys from 35 food pantries (63% response rate)
- 3 focus groups with 19 food pantries with and without nutrition policies
- 5 interviews with food banks, grocery retailers and WA State Department of Agriculture

Process for creating, implementing & sustaining nutrition policies

Three key elements of nutrition policies

1. Setting & Buy In
2. Defining Healthy Food
3. Implementation

54% have an Implementation plan
48% share with their food donors
16% share with financial donors



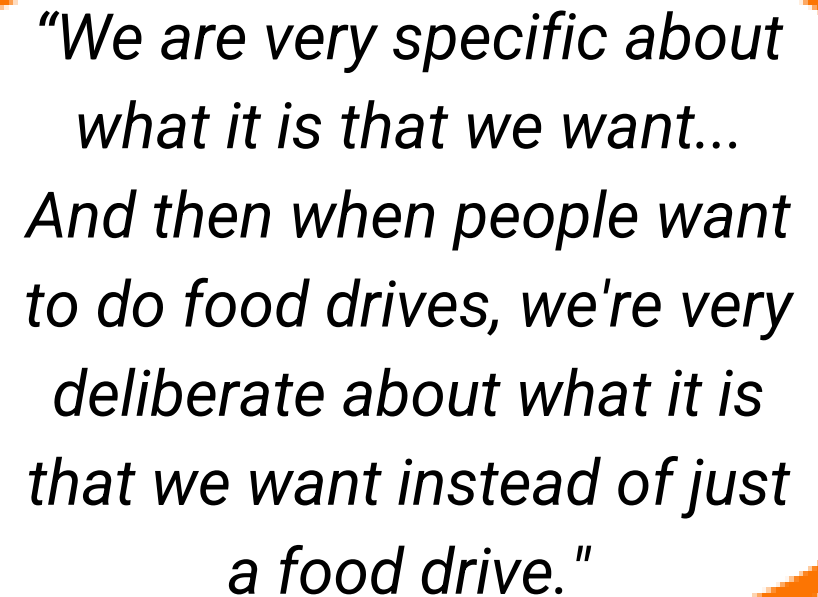
“Moving away from charity and towards health equity.”

Setting aspirations & cementing practices

Impact of Nutrition Policies

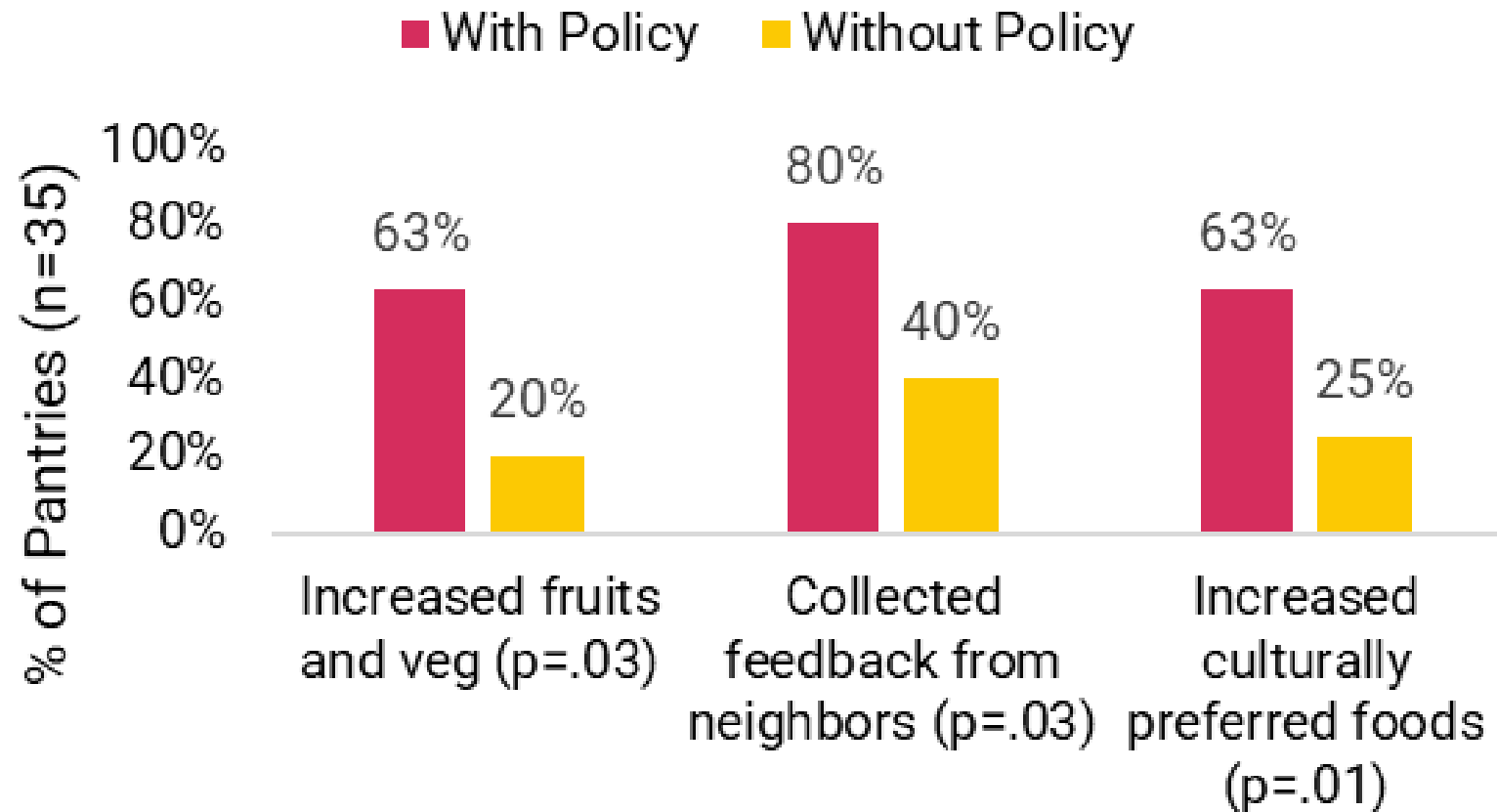
Agencies with nutrition policies are more intentional and direct in communications and relationships with donors.

- Shared their policy or donation lists with donors
- Received healthier foods



"We are very specific about what it is that we want... And then when people want to do food drives, we're very deliberate about what it is that we want instead of just a food drive."

Differences between Pantries

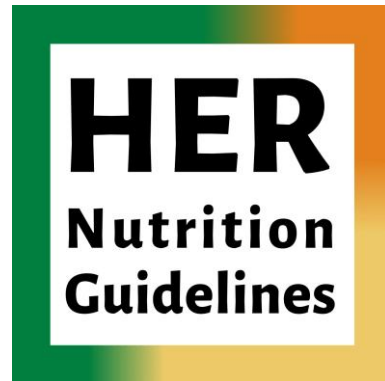


Pantries with policies reported greater increases in:

- fruits and vegetables
- collecting feedback from customers about food preferences
- customer preferred foods

Confusion about Nutritious Foods

- Except among pantries with nutrition policies, there was confusion about defining “healthy” or “nutritious” foods
- The HER Guidelines can provide clear guidance and help gather standard data



“One thing that would help us talk about this easier is to have better metrics. When we talk about healthy food, you know, what is that? How do we measure that? How do we measure culturally relevant food?”

Priorities for Funding

- 1 FOOD**

Food costs are high and nutritious foods are often more expensive. Pantry priorities include: fresh produce, meat, eggs, and spices.
- 2 EQUIPMENT**

Offering healthy foods often requires cold storage.
- 3 STAFFING**

In addition to volunteers, dedicated staff are also key to building capacity to offer nutritious foods.
- 4 FACILITY**

Maintaining a space cost funds that are often not covered by grants.

"Refrigerator space is hard to come by"

"I would probably put more in wages for my staff"

"There's no doubt if we had the funding, there would be some things that we would always have available. [We] would have way more vegetables and way more fruit available."



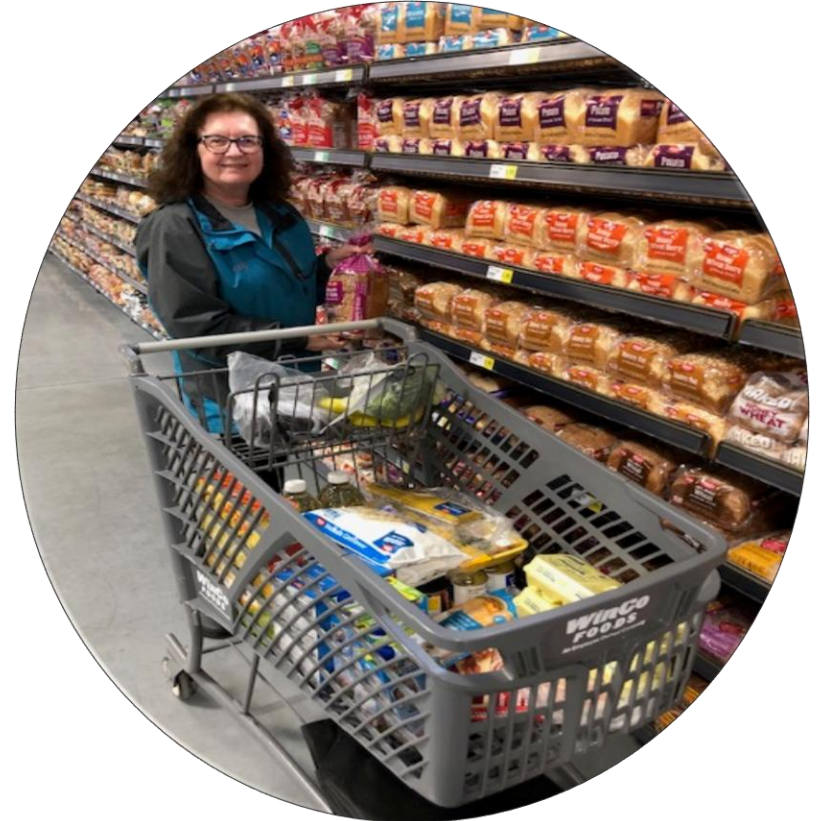
NEW DAY MINISTRY

Nutrition Policy

Chantal Brooks



About New Day Ministry



Developing Our Nutrition Policy

Before



After

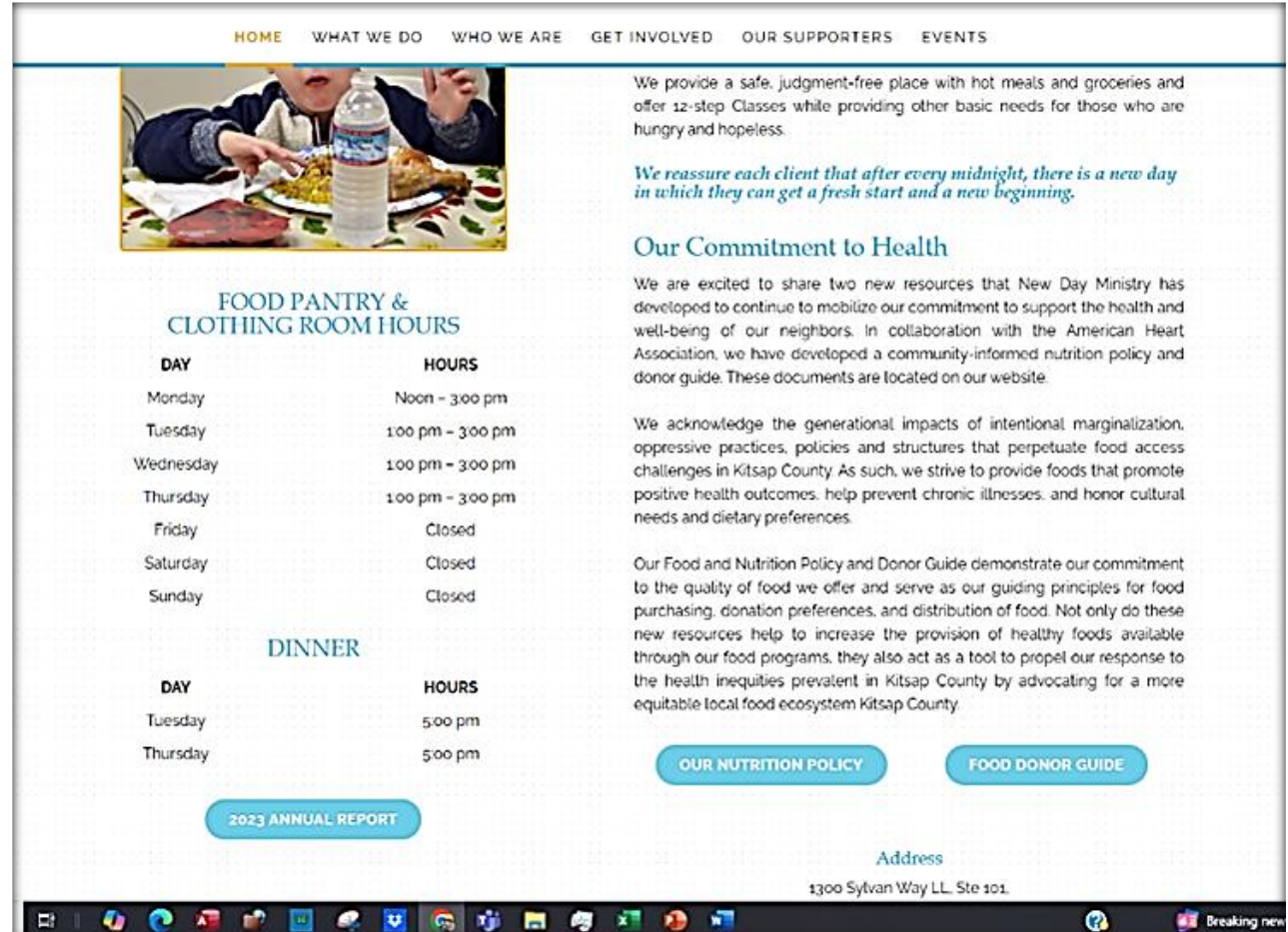


Visual Guides




How We Use our Nutrition Policy

- Purchasing Food
- Collecting Food
- Food Distribution



The screenshot displays the New Day Ministry website. At the top is a navigation bar with links: HOME, WHAT WE DO, WHO WE ARE, GET INVOLVED, OUR SUPPORTERS, and EVENTS. Below the navigation bar is a hero image of a child eating. To the right of the image is a paragraph: "We provide a safe, judgment-free place with hot meals and groceries and offer 12-step Classes while providing other basic needs for those who are hungry and hopeless." Below this is a quote: "We reassure each client that after every midnight, there is a new day in which they can get a fresh start and a new beginning." The main content area features a section titled "FOOD PANTRY & CLOTHING ROOM HOURS" with a table of hours. Below this is a section titled "DINNER" with a table of hours. To the right of the tables is a section titled "Our Commitment to Health" with two paragraphs. At the bottom of the main content area are two buttons: "OUR NUTRITION POLICY" and "FOOD DONOR GUIDE". Below these buttons is a button for the "2023 ANNUAL REPORT". At the bottom of the page is the address: "1300 Sylvan Way LL Ste 101".

HOME WHAT WE DO WHO WE ARE GET INVOLVED OUR SUPPORTERS EVENTS



We provide a safe, judgment-free place with hot meals and groceries and offer 12-step Classes while providing other basic needs for those who are hungry and hopeless.

We reassure each client that after every midnight, there is a new day in which they can get a fresh start and a new beginning.

Our Commitment to Health

We are excited to share two new resources that New Day Ministry has developed to continue to mobilize our commitment to support the health and well-being of our neighbors. In collaboration with the American Heart Association, we have developed a community-informed nutrition policy and donor guide. These documents are located on our website.

We acknowledge the generational impacts of intentional marginalization, oppressive practices, policies and structures that perpetuate food access challenges in Kitsap County. As such, we strive to provide foods that promote positive health outcomes, help prevent chronic illnesses, and honor cultural needs and dietary preferences.

Our Food and Nutrition Policy and Donor Guide demonstrate our commitment to the quality of food we offer and serve as our guiding principles for food purchasing, donation preferences, and distribution of food. Not only do these new resources help to increase the provision of healthy foods available through our food programs, they also act as a tool to propel our response to the health inequities prevalent in Kitsap County by advocating for a more equitable local food ecosystem Kitsap County.

DAY	HOURS
Monday	Noon - 3:00 pm
Tuesday	1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
Wednesday	1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
Thursday	1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
Friday	Closed
Saturday	Closed
Sunday	Closed

DINNER

DAY	HOURS
Tuesday	5:00 pm
Thursday	5:00 pm

[OUR NUTRITION POLICY](#) [FOOD DONOR GUIDE](#)

[2023 ANNUAL REPORT](#)

[Address](#)
1300 Sylvan Way LL Ste 101

Senior Program



Meal Planning



Food Rescue





- **Food Pantry**
- **Grant Writing**

- **Food Drives**



How This Policy Supports Our Mission



- Strengthens our Mission
- Fosters Partnerships
- Healthier Meals
- Cultural Holidays

Food Pantry - Inventory & Labeling

Food Drives



SWAP



Flexibility



Helpful Resources

1. **PDF LIST: Connecticut Foodshare** created a pdf list of foods and their categories as well as some automatic ranking based on the HER guidelines and SWAP System. **(WATER, DESSERTS, CONDIMENTS, ETC)**

- **DOCUMENT LOCATED AT:** https://www.lcghd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Guide-for-Ranking-Food-with-SWAP_HER-5-10-22-2.pdf

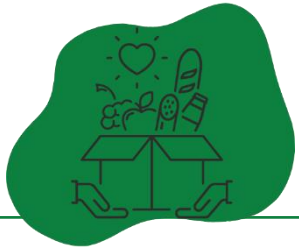
2. **For Identifying Grains: DURUM WHEAT, WHEAT FLOUR, SEMOLINA:** We've found out that identifying **whole grains is tricky** so we used Oldways Whole Grains Council:

- [Identifying Whole Grain Products | The Whole Grains Council](#)

3. **Videos:** FoodShare has **two good training videos** about using the SWAP system on YouTube (Connecticut Food Share)

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rsRWH2RAvCs>
- [SWAP In Food Banks](#)

Recommendations:



Food Pantries

- Create an implementation plan
- Collect feedback from customers
- Diversify food sources



Food Banks

- Model better nutrition practices
- Support diversifying food sources
- Create reports & share data



Govt Agencies

- Use the HER Guidelines for commodity foods
- Offer low barrier, multi-year funding
- Support healthy donations



Retailers

- Train staff on donation & divert program
- Provide quality food
- Track donated food

Next Steps - American Heart Association

1. Disseminate results throughout Washington State and nationally
2. Expand implementation guidance to better support food pantries in launching and maintaining their nutrition policies.
3. Explore collective action with key stakeholders to advocate for larger systems change.
4. Continue to provide technical assistance and capacity building to food pantries supporting their efforts to distribute nutritious food.

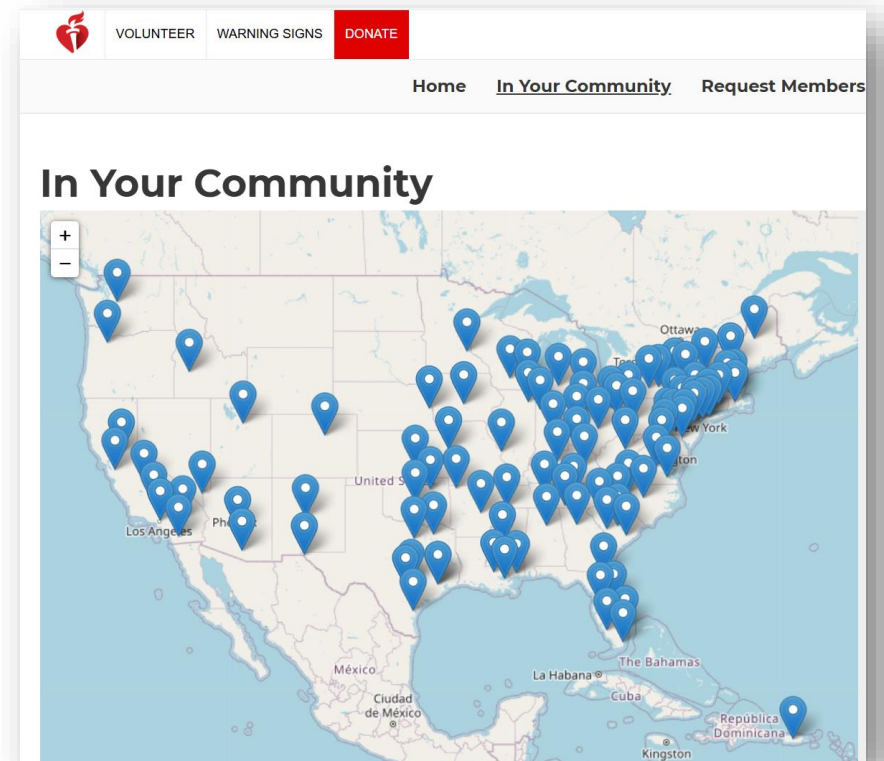
Want to work together?

Connect with local Community Impact staff:

[American Heart Association Community Opportunity Tool](#)

Or reach out to us at:

elena.ocallahan@heart.org or cherish.hart@heart.org



Next Steps - WFC

Looking ahead, transitional time for the coalition.

- Our hope is to **continue to collaborate** with all the partners we have developed in this arena, especially the AHA. More outreach to our Board of Directors. Seeking new partners.
- We will continue to **share report & discuss** with leaders and food system stakeholders.
- Continue to **provide implementation guidance, TA & resources** to a limited number of pantries.
- Through relationship building with **retail & food bank partners** we hope to advocate for system changes.

Questions?



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May Webinar: Self-Care to Community-Care: Creating a Culture of Support

May 28th from 1 pm – 2 pm EST

For non-profit organizations, the urgency to address food insecurity often leaves little room to recharge, leading to burn out and staff turnover. At the same time, there is pressure to meet increasing community needs with limited resources. Self-care can feel out of reach, yet it's essential for sustaining our work and serving our communities effectively. Join us during Mental Health Awareness month to explore how nonprofits can foster both individual and collective well-being by discovering strategies for integrating self-care across all levels of your organization.



Registration link:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_XjachTXrQoKLrHWXollyTw