



MEALS PARTNERSHIP COALITION

"The Meals Partnership Coalition works to utilize private and public resources to ensure that safe and nutritious meals are available to hungry people."

OCTOBER MEETING MINUTES

Date: October 14th, 2010

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Location: Compass Center – 210 Alaskan Way South, Seattle, WA 98104

In Attendance:

Michael Gregory – Phinney Neighborhood Association

Peter Quenguyen - South Park Seniors

Jason Gortney – Children’s Home Society WW

Brent Herrmann – MCC

Norm Hummel – Seattle UGM

Elise Peizner – Food Lifeline

Jerrimi Hoffman - FLL

Fe Arreola – City of Seattle

Shayne Kraemer – MPC Staff

Hollianne Monson – YWCA Angelines

Matt Fox – ROOTS

Eve – Food Not Bombs

Diane Carmel – PMSC

Tasha Fekeshaz – LLAA

Elizabeth Martinez – MOW

Sharon Poole – Noel House

Krista Grimm – OSL

Waing Waing – Senior Services

Ref Lindmark – Blessed Sacrament

Lynnet Mitchell – WAPI

Angela Wilhite – El Centro de la Raza

Linda Berger – HIP

Beverly Graham - OSL

Topics of Discussion:

How to identify and best address cultural diversity in your meal programs, including dietary needs, language barriers, and how cultural makeup affects those we serve.

Waing Waing began by introducing herself and explained the initiative within Senior Services to meet diverse cultural needs with clients and how to meet those needs. The initiative within Senior Services was a long term investment that took 7 years to really take hold within the organization.

Some of the critical points of discussion were:

- Cultural competency and understanding diverse communities takes time to implement
- Does our organizational culture inhibit cultural diversity and cultural competency
- WIFM – What’s in it for me? Cultural competence is a challenging task, but the biggest payoff is that it helps organizations stay relevant to the community’s need.

- This work lends itself to funding outcomes and goals by:
 - Shows a commitment to social justice
- Each agency should take a moment to examine what cultural competence means to them.
 - Cultural competence can be defined as the ability of individuals and systems to work or respond effectively across cultures in a way that acknowledges and respects the culture of the person or organization being served.
- It is important to ask ourselves what makes a client or meal guest want to come back for services?
 - Welcoming environment?
 - Non judgmental staff and volunteers?
 - Food consistent with the dietary needs of our meal guests?
- It has been stated that when you cater to the minority you benefit the majority by allowing access to an expanded group dynamic.

(Throughout this discussion the group referred to the attached diagram to better understand their individual cultural environments. The thoughts in blue were added through discussion)

Waing Waing closed with the thought that this may be overwhelming to tackle all at once, so it's more important to take a piece of it to start with, to break it down and (re)build upon it one piece at a time. By enhancing your organization's cultural competence is really more about having a strategic intervention to better meet the constant and changing needs of your clients, it doesn't mean we have to have answers to all the questions and issues, but it's important to understand the relationship between things and build consciousness about the intended and unintended production of racialized outcomes/impact(s) of social inequity.

Committee Updates:

Emergency Preparedness: Did not meet this month and will be meeting in November to further discuss adverse weather plans and organizational calls to determine who has plans in place.

Steering Committee: Did not meet for the month of October and will meet again in November.

Bulk Purchasing: Upcoming purchases of City Funded Bulk Foods are:

- December 6th – 500 pounds of sweet potatoes
- Dec. 13th – 150 cases of whole turkeys in the 10 – 12 pound range
- Dec. 20th – 85 cases of whole fresh cranberries
- Dec. 27th – 85 cases of olive oil
- January Spend down items – 1000 cases of 100% shelf stable 8oz orange juice, 100 cases canned corn, canned chicken

Agency Updates / Shared resources: Brent announced that Millionair Club has 50 pound cases of frozen white fish for sharing.

PNA's annual fundraiser – Pig Out for soup kitchen is coming up.

OSL announced that the Outdoor Meal Site will be closed for 4 days due to criminal activity.

Partner Updates:

City of Seattle –Fe Arreola:

- The new HSD Director was confirmed this week and will be going out into the community more to meet agencies.
- The City asked that programs gear up for snow and ice and have a plan in place in case of snow closures.
- Contract letters for contracted meal programs will go out next week.

Food Lifeline – Rachel Butler: FLL will be closed Thursday and Friday for the Thanksgiving Holiday, and Jackie Dale has left Food Lifeline to take another position elsewhere.

Seattle Human Services Coalition – Shayne Kraemer: The City of Seattle is facing a severe budget crisis and we need our members to help testify to the importance of system support provided by MPC and to recommend that there are no cuts to human services. The upcoming public hearing is:
October 26 at Seattle City Council Chambers – at 5pm.

NEXT MEETING: The coalition members present agreed to cancel the November MPC meeting due to the Veteran’s Day Holiday. Our next meeting will be on December 9th at the Compass Center and will be our annual holiday party with food and door prizes. We will be reviewing the year, and looking towards 2011’s work and goals.

Understanding Your Cultural Environment

1. Self advocate with your funders to discuss changes in the community you serve.

**External Social,
Political & Economic
Pressures & Resources**

Cultural Pressures & Resources

Negotiable: Resources, Policies, Program Design, Practices, etc.

How do we involve our communities in this discussion? Examples given were community advisory boards, oral surveys, other survey tools, discussions with other organizations within the culture of the guest you are serving, relationship building.

Reach outside of our own agencies to build relationships, and build trust

Non-negotiable: Mission & Values, Resources, Contract Mandates, etc.

I.e dietary standards dictated through funders, such as milk in the USDA funding.

It was discussed that milk may not be appropriate for SE Asian communities as they are usually lactose intolerant. How do we meet this need in other ways?

Inner structured box (the non-negotiable area):

- What are the "non-negotiable" pieces of your program? For example: data collection, budget and food resource limitations/restrictions, federal RDA requirements, core values, etc.
- What are the cultural barriers created by these non-negotiable? For example: senior hot lunch needs to include milk in order to be counted as meeting RDA requirement to be a reimbursed meal, but some cultures are not used to drinking cow milk, or some individuals are lactose intolerant (and this is more common in some ethnic groups than others).
- How might you remove or minimize the barriers? For example: what changes can you make in the "negotiable" area to help mitigate the "undesired impact" of the mandate while still keeping the integrity of the "intent" of the mandate (i.e. aligning impact with intent); how can you give feedback to the funders and advocate for changes they should make to better meet the needs of the clients (i.e. advocacy)?

Middle amorphous circle (the negotiable area):

- What and where are the "negotiable" pieces of your program -- things that you can adapt, e.g. makeup of your staff and volunteers, training for your staff and volunteers, attitudes/core values and organizational culture, delivery of information in multiple languages and format, food choices (no pork for Jewish and Muslim clients, no beef for Hindu clients, no dairy for vegans and lactose intolerant individuals, people with diabetes, etc.-- this can depend on values and how values are prioritized), timing of program, ABCD - relationship and partnership building with community members and other CBOs, how do you refer to your clients - "guests, participants, etc.?", how do you greet them, what does the setting look like?
- What are the cultural barriers experienced (both ways) with the current setup of these "negotiable" areas? For example, does your workforce reflect the communities you are serving? - "the number of Latino clients we serve meals to have increased but none of our staff and volunteers speaks Spanish so we don't understand what they want from us" or "we were fine serving the Vietnamese elders until Phan left us and now less and less of them come."
- How might you "style-flex" (i.e. adapt, redesign, modify, etc.) to be more culturally appropriate and relevant to the clients you are serving? For example, "Two of my staff and I have been taking Introduction to Chinese at the Community College, and next quarter we are going to take Russian, so that we can at least greet our guests in their native tongue and make them feel valued and appreciated."
- What resources would you need to be able to adapt and overcome the challenges you face to make changes? --- ABCD (asset based community development) approach is one way to assess where you might find these resources.

Outer most circle (the neighborhood/community/network/structural relationships):

- Who is in your authorizing environment, what are the relationships and what are the important factors to consider about them?
- How can you influence them?
- Who and/or what will be your potential challenges and challengers?
- Who and/or what will be your potential resources, allies, champions, etc?
- Who are the strangers and how can you invite them in? Who needs to be at the table in the conversations to work on the policy and program (re)design?
- What are the shared values about food, diversity, environmental conservation, health, etc. that you can build upon?