



**Howard County Local Health Improvement Coalition**

Food Security Virtual Meeting

October 5, 2022

2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Virtual via Zoom

**Minutes**

**Members Present:**

Karen Basinger, U. of MD Extension  
Melanie Berdyck, Giant Food  
Erika Chavarria, Columbia Community Care  
Chiara D’Amore, Columbia Ecology Institute  
Willie Flowers, HC NAACP  
Alison Gerber, Dept of Community Resources  
Tiffany Holtzman, S.A.F.E Food Pantry  
Paloma Leon, Luminus  
Kendra Robinson, HC Health Department  
Carrie Ross, HC Community Action Council  
Razan Sahuri, Univ. of MD Extension Snap Ed  
Nikki Savoy, Accessible Resources for Independence  
Weida Stoecker, MD Dept of Agriculture  
Theresa Taylor, Community Ecology Institute  
Antigone Vickery, HC Health Department

**Staff Present:**

Reena Rambharat, HC Local Health Improvement Coalition  
Sonya Lloyd, HC Local Health Improvement Coalition  
Natalie Hall, HC Health Department  
AJ Jordan, HC Local Health Improvement Coalition

Topic/Agenda	Discussion	Action/Follow-up
<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>	<p>Reena Rambharat, HCLHIC Director, called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.</p> <p>Ms. Rambharat provided a welcome to members in attendance and asked members to enter their names and organizations into the chat box.</p> <p>Ms. Rambharat reviewed the meeting goal of gathering partners to discuss collaborative efforts to address food and nutrition insecurity in Howard County.</p>	

<p><b>Updates from other meetings</b></p>	<p>Ms. Rambharat shared the old LHIC HC Resource Guide – Food Assistance and Nutrition Education Programs from 2019, as well as the Howard County Food Access Resources document.</p> <p>Ms. Rambharat opened the floor to the members asking what type of food guide they would like to share with the community. With any additional funding next year, this can be explored.</p> <p>Ms. Natalie Hall, Howard County Health Department, said any resources can be added to CAREAPP, including pop-up pantries. She suggested creating a postcard with a QR Card to give out to people. Ms. Hall stated that CAREAPP helps people find resources in Howard County. The organization can enter these pop-up pantries into CAREAPP. Natalie said CAREAPP notes any changes made to the organization. Find Resources, the vendor, will verify it and make the changes to the resource page.</p> <p>Ms. Carrie Ross, Director of HC Community Action Council, said they did a paper food guide with OEM. The problem was that pantry times changed all the time. They would have to update it monthly. She likes using CAREAPP and being able to go paperless.</p> <p>Ms. Karen Basinger, U of MD Extension, said paper is costly, a lot of Churches have food pantries and pop up pantries. Probably keep on the internet and let people to print out on their own.</p> <p>Ms. Nikki Savoy, ARI, said food pantries can be shared on the LHIC website or LHIC social media. Ms. Savoy is going to share the ARI Food guide with the LHIC. Can email or print out their food resource guide and send to community members.</p> <p>Ms. Rambharat said the LHIC will share their Food Resource Guide with Ms. Savoy and members once it has been updated.</p> <p>Ms. Tiffany Holtzman, S.A.F.E. Food Pantry, said having a food resource guide is ideal.</p> <p>Ms. Rambharat thanked the committee for assisting in pointing out partners that should be invited to this committee. Recently, separate meetings were held with the Columbia Community Care, Columbia Ecology Institute and Kim Eisenreich to get a sense of what else was happening already in the County.</p>	<p>Link to last meeting documents can be found on the LHIC portal here: <a href="https://www.hclhic.org/home/meeting/2022?catId=365">https://www.hclhic.org/home/meeting/2022?catId=365</a></p> <p>CAREAPP website: <a href="https://findhcreources.org/">https://findhcreources.org/</a>. Email Natalie Hall at <a href="mailto:nhall@howardcountymd.gov">nhall@howardcountymd.gov</a> with any questions or to set up a CAREAPP training.</p> <p>Biden – Harris Administration National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition and Health document: <a href="https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/White-House-National-Strategy-on-Hunger-Nutrition-and-Health-FINAL.pdf">https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/White-House-National-Strategy-on-Hunger-Nutrition-and-Health-FINAL.pdf</a></p>
<p><b>Announcements</b></p>	<p>The next quarterly hybrid full LHIC Meeting will be held on October 20<sup>th</sup>.</p>	<p>Agenda for full LHIC Meeting can be found on the website: <a href="https://www.hclhic.org/home/meeting/2022?catId=1">https://www.hclhic.org/home/meeting/2022?catId=1</a>.</p> <p>Register for the Full LHIC Meeting: <a href="https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2022-hclhic-full-coalition-meetings-tickets-188936412897">https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2022-hclhic-full-coalition-meetings-tickets-188936412897</a>.</p> <p>Any announcements to share with members, please email the LHIC team at: <a href="mailto:lhic@howardcountymd.gov">lhic@howardcountymd.gov</a></p>

<p><b>Howard County Food and Nutrition Survey</b></p>	<p>The first meeting of the Committee discussed gathering insights from residents related to food and nutrition security and came up with some questions for a survey. The purpose is to gather insights from residents to help identify specific gaps to guide the committee’s efforts. The survey will be translated into other languages and those links will be shared when they are ready. There are incentives to give to people filling out the surveys.</p> <p>A Food Security Forum/Roundtable will be held next Spring to review the data and brainstorm ideas for the plan for the committee moving forward.</p>	<p>Partners are asked to share the survey link with members (English): <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HCLHIC_Food_22">https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HCLHIC_Food_22</a>.</p> <p>Email Reena at <a href="mailto:brambharat@howardcountymd.gov">brambharat@howardcountymd.gov</a> if need support in getting community members to fill out the surveys.</p>
<p><b>Food Security Needs: Short Term</b></p>	<p>Ms. Carrie Ross, Director of Community Action Council (CAC), shared what she is seeing in terms of the food related needs in the community. She is seeing single moms, younger age groups in need of food, behind in rent payments, unemployed or underemployed. They are also seeing high numbers with use of the food bank where they are feeding 70 families a day now, giving people 7 days’ worth of food who are coming two or three times a month now vs. once-a-month pre-pandemic.</p> <p>Ms. Paloma Leon, Luminus, helps people sign up with SNAP and said lots of issues with people signing up, having trouble.</p> <p>Mr. Willie Flowers, HC NAACP, noted that people are having trouble with accessing free and reduced meals in schools. He noted that there is a need for a structure to help families, demystifying accessing food services. Mr. Flowers also proposed navigators to help community members, but you need additional staff and more money.</p> <p>Ms. Savoy, ARI, said she is seeing impact from the changes that were made to the free and reduced lunches across the nation. Some of the pandemic era programs and provisions ended which had made it easier for students to be eligible for free and reduced lunch.</p> <p>Ms. Savoy stated that there are new lower income groups now because of inflation with food costs making it difficult for people to qualify by income for SNAP benefits. A lot of people are not aware of Maryland Access Point to sign up for SNAP and other community benefits.</p> <p>Ms. Erika Chavarria, Columbia Community Care, noted that majority of the population she sees are undocumented status or they are just above the threshold. She sees a lot of people working more than one job and still struggle to put food on the table and noted that we should be advocating for universal free meals in the schools on the state and federal level.</p> <p>Ms. Chavarria said to reach all people we need to go into the communities and providing paper information, door to door knocking, setting up tables in grocery stores, barber shop, community centers, middle of neighborhoods. Outreach needs to be on the ground, cannot just rely on the online, digital divide – a real problem in the community and there is</p>	

	<p>need for paper to give to people – otherwise miss a whole population of people.</p> <p>Ms. Karen Basinger, U of MD Extension, watched the White House Conference on Hunger. She said we need to win back the trust of the community. Other vulnerable groups include those with food intolerances and allergies, we need to stock those types of foods at food pantries.</p>	
<p><b>Owen Brown Place in Columbia</b></p>	<p>Ms. Rambharat spoke about how the HCHD Community Engagement Team has been doing outreach at 8 residential communities providing fitness, nutrition, and screenings along with larger ‘health fair’ type events with multiple partners and a mini farmer’s market offering fresh fruits and vegetables through Roving Radish and gift cards.</p> <p>Ms. Rambharat said the health fairs have been very well attended including at the Owen Brown Place on September 24<sup>th</sup>. Residents are older and primarily spoke Korean, Mandarin, Farsi, and Russian languages. They started to line up an hour early for the fruits and vegetables and gift cards; some of them were pushing and worrying about their ability to get to the items since they had to go through the stations before getting to the end.</p> <p>Ms. Rambharat mentioned that the items ran out with close to 200 residents in attendance, but this demonstrates the need within the community, and we wanted to explore what could be done to assist the community related to providing food regularly to the community. The barriers seen here with older populations, limited mobility/ability and language barriers is something that we are seeing.</p> <p>Ms. Rambharat opened the floor up about potential collaborations. What are the ways that partners can assist this community? Potential for a pop-up pantry or work with Giant was mentioned.</p> <p>Ms. Basinger suggested working with faith-based groups to reach out to the Owen Brown residents.</p> <p>Ms. Razan Sahuri, University of MD Extension SNAP Ed, suggested contacting the adult day care centers that host the residences of Owen Brown.</p>	<p>Email LHIC to discuss potential collaborations, thoughts, or ideas with Owen Brown Place in Columbia at <a href="mailto:lhic@howardcountymd.gov">lhic@howardcountymd.gov</a>.</p>
<p><b>Food Security Needs: Long-Term</b></p>	<p>Ms. Theresa Taylor, Nourishing Gardens Program Director of the Columbia Ecology Institute, briefly spoke about what they are doing at Freetown Farm. CEI started new program a year ago called Nourishing Gardens which works to transform ecological dead zones like lawns into gardens that nourish people and communities.</p> <p>Ms. Taylor said the program has installed almost 25 gardens in the community in Columbia by the end of Fall all have some edible component, some are freely open to the community like at Howard Community College. Trying to reduce barriers to community access. Offering more adult workshops – arts based, gardening, personal well-being. CEI does do container /</p>	

	<p>balcony gardens.</p> <p>Ms. Rambharat opened the floor to the members on a potential collaboration based on what partners are seeing and hearing. How could CEI assist in more of a long-term effort with Food Insecurity in Howard County?</p> <p>Ms. Basinger said there is a new Master Gardener Coordinator at the University of MD Extension. They teach classes on container gardening and their services are free.</p> <p>Mr. Flowers said we can't assume people will want to grow vegetables. Outreach component is important, make sure there is a demand for gardening. NAACP garden is limited to people interested in growing veg and fruits. There is a needed education component to see the value in access to chemically free, locally grown food. He mentioned that we need ambassadors to guide people to positive outcomes such as savings from growing own food vs getting it at the grocery store.</p> <p>Ms. Lloyd noted in the chat box adding little free pantries, additional food collection donation bins, and food drives as options.</p> <p>Ms. Savoy mentioned in the chat box partnerships with housing authorities, great outreach for ARI.</p>	
<p><b>Next Steps and Wrap-up</b></p>	<p>The meeting ended at 3:13pm. Sonya will send out the minutes along with the survey links for members to share with their community.</p> <p>The next meeting will be in early December. A Doodle Poll will be sent out to determine the best date and time to meet.</p>	

Respectfully submitted by  
Sonya Lloyd, MA  
Community Engagement Coordinator  
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