Tampa Bay Network to End Hunger

April 14, 2016

United Way Suncoast

Minutes

Agenda

- **Introductions – Deborah Lekenta**

- **Network Business**

  - **New hire – Ace Padian**

- **Updates from last meeting**

  - **ABAWD – Jennifer Webb**
  - **Hunger Gap Map update – Caitlyn P.**

- **Work Team Updates**

- **Any additional info to share**

- **Adjournment**

The meeting was called to order at 9:30am by Deborah Lekenta.

- **Introductions – Deborah Lekenta**
  - Everyone went around the room and introduced themselves and their organization.

- **Network Business**
  - **New hire – Ace Padian**, introduced by Caitlyn Peacock and herself. Will be Project Coordinator reporting to Caitlyn.

- **Updates from last meeting**

  - **ABAWD – Jennifer Webb**
    - Overview of the problem: Able-bodied adults (not disabled) without dependents. Must be over 18 but not a senior (age 55 and up because seniors are on Social Security), must not be disabled or receiving SSI,

cannot be pregnant or have kids. New requirement that they work 30 hrs / week for 3 years, only a 3-month grace period to find this work or volunteering. Estimated 17,249 in Pinellas, 7,381 in Pasco, almost 3,000 in Pasco, over 27,000 in Hillsborough, 11,000 in Polk County. Total of over 66,220 people who are going to be looking to go to Career Source to do the local work force development agency program that they have to do to qualify. Nationally, there was legislation intended to penalize people who refused to find employment, but actually just penalized people who lived in areas where work was not available. It doesn't account for the geographic circumstances. Florida did not apply for an exemption for people living in economically depressed areas, but Hernando is considered an economically depressed area. Now it is a political process in Florida where you have to apply to the legislature first before you can apply for a waiver. They have made the administrative process subject to the political process. So Florida was unable to ask for the exemption and we also failed to ask for extra money to cover the training costs for finding people jobs because we didn't pledge to try to find everyone a job. It's thus very unlikely that these 66,000 people will be able to find jobs because we don't have enough job development agencies in this area. Pinellas has 2 centers, Hillsborough has 3 and they are far-flung – hard to get to.

- <u>Reports from local charities</u>: Locally, Daystar has been interviewing their clients and they noticed that elderly or disabled clients are getting notices saying that they need to come in to renew their SNAP benefits but Daystar is unable to recertify them because the system says they're covered for two years now instead of one. So there seems to be an administrative gap causing this problem. Elderly and disabled people are being affected by this ABAWD system even though they shouldn't be.

- <u>Legislative progress</u>: There are two bills in legislature right now, and you can only email legislators who represent you (you have to enter your zip code), but you can call anyone. The Senate bill extends benefits to veterans without additional workforce development, and if a state does not provide you with a slot in a work force development program and you can't find a job, you can keep your benefits. The House bill is more general, and says that SNAP beneficiaries are exempt from work requirements if they are not offered a position in a state job training or work fair program. Everyone can follow the bills on the federal government website and contact their elected representatives by email or phone to urge them to support the bills. The bills are Senate Bill 2420, sponsored by Senator Blumenthal (D-CT), and House Bill 1025.

- <u>Next Steps</u>: Caitlyn P.: We will put the handout Jennifer has been working on up on the TBNTEH website and some information about what to do to help. Deborah L: Maybe we can get Career Source to come to this meeting

and talk to us about what's going on and we can come to them as support, let them know what problems we are running into. Suggestion to have a petition at Will Carey's event across from the zoo so we can get 500-1000 signatures supporting the legislature. And if any direct service agencies see big increases in people needing help, we should track it. Beth (SPFC): Yes, we have already seen a big increase just in the last few weeks, because the deadline was April 1. Do we need a place to share information so we don't have to all email Caitlyn and wait for her to update? Could set up a Quip – Jennifer will do it and you can download the app on your phone. That way if seniors are being affected when they shouldn't be, clinics are seeing far more clients, etc., we can share that info, and then there can also be a place for solutions that have worked or that we should work towards.

- **Hunger Gap Map Update – Caitlyn Peacock**

  - <u>Overview:</u> The map has a supply-demand analysis. Demand is based on census data – median household income, poverty rate, ethnicity, etc. sent to Feeding America International, and they give back the number of missing meals at the census tract. Then we have a formula to figure out the percentage of census-tracked in each zip code, and we aggregate the data by zip code. That's the demand number. Then we map that with the supply, which consists of emergency feeding system: pantries, hot meal providers, mobile pantries, weekend bags for kids. The informational layers are SNAP meals, WIC meals, school meals, SFSP meals, food deserts, and census data, so you can see how many meals are available in each community. Then the location information layers are the dots on the map – pantry sites, hot meal providers, SFSP sites, bus routes, farmers market, SNAP retailers, Access sites.
  - <u>How to convert pounds to meals (Andrew):</u> USDA says one meal = 1.2 pounds, based on the suggested serving size for each component of the meal. We can also calculate by the number of dollars going in – each meal in this area is around $2.62, so we can calculate the number of meals being provided through SNAP and WIC. We convert everything to meals, whether we have it in pounds or dollars or bags of weekend food.
  - <u>Suggestions for improved functionality</u>: Beth H: Would be nice to have the methodology available on the site – to show each data set, because SPFC just applied for a grant and used Hunger Map data, but had to click on each zip code and calculate the number of missing meals and pounds needed because the grant needed to know pounds, not meals. It only took about ten minutes – it wasn't hard, but it would be nice to have a credible source to refer someone else to as if it were a published document, rather than each user doing it on their own. Pat: and we are also going to try to convert the census tract data into zip codes so we can see the number of people who are food insecure in each area. Would also be good to track health, maybe obesity rates. Rosie: which schools have high percentage of free and reduced lunch? So we can highlight or identify those areas – maybe the schools with over 50% and make those a different color. Caitlyn: We are also

going to include the number of seniors living in poverty per census data. Rosie: maybe add in the location of community gardens. Carol Smith or Annette, or David Whitwam and Ericka McThenia can help with those locations; so can Malory Fisher. Mandy Cloninger (Trinity Café): Would also be good to have a high-level executive summary showing food deserts, etc. to be able to give to reporters or others outside the hunger field to easily be able to digest and see why some areas do and don't have big gaps. Pat: And also don't discount the areas that aren't red right now only because of all the work being done. We need to recognize that those are problem areas and also recognize all the good work that charities are doing in those areas. Even a way to measure the difference our work is making. Cait: We will be adding the bus stops as well. Beth: On Pat's point, two years ago there were two red areas in South Pinellas, and it took a lot of work to get mobile pantries and then find churches that could be permanent pantries to work in those areas. We would not have known that those were problem areas without the map. It turned out that in one of the areas, they were already getting free food and didn't need help, but in the other area, the need was very acute and very appreciated. Pat: Yes, because the map doesn't solve anything unless we do something based on the data we see there. I wanted it initially to see where I needed to put mobile pantries. Different charities can use the data in different ways. Cait: Also working on time-phasing of supplies: if map shows there's no gap, that just means throughout the year the supply and demand are balanced, but if everyone is serving on the same one day of the week, that's a problem. So we will be working on that as well. Feeding America has made some changes in how they approve the information, so we get the demand numbers later than we have in the past from them. We can update the supply data, but not the demand and therefore not the gap. That won't be done until towards the end of the summer.

- **Work Team Updates**

  - Transportation: Kevin couldn't be here today but Cait has his update. Working to secure funding for two transportation initiatives: due tomorrow. First is a framework for churches and faith-based organizations to use their existing vehicles (church vans) to provide rides for food insecure people to food pantries, grocery stores, health clinics, and exercise locations. Giving out a survey to see how people get to food pantries. Second is a stakeholder outreach project to communicate emergency food needs to HART, to align transit and emergency food in Hillsborough, with goal to scale it up for the tri-county area. Meeting April 19, 2-3:30 at United Way to discuss the survey tool and next steps for conducting the survey.
  - Garden to Go: sending info to clients about how to close up their garden beds for the summer. At our 3 sites that UF is helping with, we had 11 return out of 25 and 19 new people sign up. So the return rate is about half, and one of the problems is that we are completely funded by the SNAP Ed grant and we're only allowed to give out incentives that are $4 or less. So technically the boxes are a library service, where we have to get them back if people don't continue the program. For next fall, we're thinking about doing more partnerships to get different funding so

we don't have to be the bad guys trying to get the boxes back. The homemade boxes did not work as well, so they switched to using the Earth Boxes. Although they give us a discount, it's still $10-13 per box, and they require more effort because they've been used before and need a lot of cleaning either from the G2Go team or from the volunteers. You need more volunteers to be able to set them up for the recipients. So there's a funding issue and also a labor issue for the reduced price boxes. And they want to be able to give the boxes to the recipients without having to try to get them back, which is almost impossible anyway. Have been giving out boxes through Meals on Wheels and they have a gardener volunteer driver who's been going to the clients' homes to check on the gardens, and it's been going really well. So we will try to plan to scale that up as well. Gail: Got an innovative grant to purchase 30 Earth Boxes and have already given away about 20 of them to different clients. We had two events where clients could come and be trained on how to put the box together. The clients have loved it and just had a bunch more people sign up following a recent luncheon.

- <u>Food recycling and composting</u> (Eve): This is kind of an advocacy group. We had a February tour at our farm to see how we take food, that its highest and best use even if it's not safe to eat is for composting, not burning or landfilling it. Tampa Bay has a strict internal policy in favor of burning food, so we're still battling to change the city ordinance in favor of composting and add food as a recoverable material along with plastic, paper, metal, rubber, etc. Pasco and Orange Counties both have very active food policy advisory councils, and they are also working at the state level to include food as a recoverable material in the state statute. So these councils are very powerful – if a city doesn't want urban gardening on balconies, Pasco had a problem with that, and the council was able to put forth an ordinance, involve the county commission, and say that it was okay to have a garden on your balcony. These little battles here and there need to be fought to let people grow their own food and choose to compost it in their own yard or bring it to our farm. They shouldn't be forced to call it garbage, because there's always a use for food. Pinellas County is very supportive, Pasco and Orange counties too, but Tampa is resistant even though they call themselves a green city. They don't even have a food policy advisory committee. Eve is trying to work with the Hillsborough county commission to start one. Would love to have more people on the food recycling work team, and to have more people come visit the composting farm on May 7 at 9:30 (Saturday). This will be at Bay Mulch Organics Recycling on Forbes Road. Also, on April 23, Eve will be speaking at 2 pm on the message that food is not garbage at EcoFest at Lowry Park. Bay Mulch Organics Recycling got a sustainability award out of over 30 businesses that applied, which is important to show the significance and viability of what they're doing in the face of Tampa's repeated efforts to shut down their composting.
- <u>Hub</u> (Andrew): We are set up now for dry storage that's shelf-stable, and just applied for a grant for the walk-ins for the Lealman community. Received about $8,000 worth of milk that they were able to bring in to the hub – that's the whole goal, that they can bring it in and distribute it when someone has a large donation available.

- - Healthy Corner Store (Pat, Jan): Pinellas County has done some of this, as has a group in Gainesville, so we can see what's already been done and not have to reinvent the wheel ourselves. Our focus is Hillsborough County, so we're using the Hunger Gap Map, looking for the food desert areas, find the SNAP retailers at convenience stores, and put them in the gaps. It takes like 20 minutes to identify zip codes with convenience stores, and the next step according to best practices (from Pinellas) is to tour them and see what they're doing, identify targets, decide on the offering, and try to engage Healthy Corner Store and get it going in Hillsborough.
    - Food recovery team – pilot in Gulfport, have learned that we need to sign charities up first so donors don't get discouraged, so we appreciate the charities that have signed up so far and we will roll out to get restaurants signed up once we have the brochures and window decals ready to go. We will target restaurants in the areas around the charities that have signed up.
    - Farm team - Neil's farm is up and running – next step is testing crops, maybe sub-tropical Asian crops that can take the heat.

- **Additional Information to Share**

  - Blake, on behalf of Will: Three-year garden anniversary EcoFest at Lowry Park with tours, canning, solar energy, composting, chickens, bee-keeping, diet, nutrition, all kinds of information being distributed. It is April 23, 10-2.

  - Mandy: Trinity Café is almost up and running, so if you have clients who need a hot meal, send them over.

  - Rosie: If you need to build a food hub, there are grants available to increase farmer-direct inputs. Local food is within 400 miles, so if a food hub is receiving donations from farmers and wants to increase that but needs trucks or refrigeration, that would be the grant to look for. May 15 is the deadline for that grant, but it needs a farmer component.

  - Caitlyn: Started development on the food sharing app, looking to reduce food waste at the consumer level and increase supply of food instead of garbage, will keep everyone updated on that.

  - Met with COSW who are supporting us; will help recruit restaurants for the food recovery app. Pat Rogers noted they were really impressed with all the work we've gotten done.

- **Adjournment at 11:00 am**