

Strategic Lean Project Report

Farm to Food Pantry Initiative Agency Design Challenge

Agency: Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA)

Partners and Customers: Harvest Against Hunger program partner, Farmer, three (3) staff from the Washington State Department of Licensing, WSDA Food Assistance program staff and Performance, and Planning Management Staff

Project Impact

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) improved Farm to Food Pantry (F2FP) Initiative Outreach, resulting in our key publication for raising awareness about the program going from a text-based fact sheet, to an infographic fact sheet that summarizes the program's impact and use of resources in an easy to understand, engaging, and visually appealing format.

The Farm to Food Pantry Initiative (F2FP) would like to reach more communities across the state, but stable funding is needed to support expansion. The program fact sheet has been used by WSDA and emergency food providers to raise awareness, recruit, and fund the initiative.

Farmers participating in the Initiative had been needing more consolidated information to provide to their customers about this partnership and their role in making fresh produce accessible to all. They now have a resource that people in their community can easily read and understand. Lead Hunger Relief Agencies now also have a material they use when soliciting community donations to support the F2FP Initiative. We prioritized including the most important and relatable information in the Fact Sheet which made it more accessible and engaging for our stakeholders and the community at large as we raise awareness about the progress of F2FP.

Project Summary

The program's current fact sheet was heavy in content and not very engaging. Some of the challenges were the wide variety of audiences or customers that we target, which has caused multiple revisions of the current fact sheet to tailor to the specific conference or event we attend. Another challenge is due to how multifaceted the initiative is and it involves both qualitative and quantitative data metrics, making it challenging to message in a factsheet for our audiences to easily understand.

We had a text-based and content heavy fact sheet compared to our target of a visually appealing and engaging fact sheet, including customer focused content, which we wanted to reach by 7/31/2019.

The Design Challenge helped our process by:

- Deconstructing the initiative and its programming in order to flush out potential improvements.
- Creating a visual way to convey the value of the initiative and include user stories.
- Identifying content that was meaningful to our audience.

Project Results



Increased Significantly **from** Farmers and Lead Hunger Relief Agencies needing resources to convey F2FP Initiative Impacts **to** Farmers, Hunger Relief Agencies, and WSDA having an outreach material that raise awareness, recruit, and fund the initiative.

Strategic Lean Project Report

Below: The old F2FP Fact Sheet is on the left. The Improved F2FP double-sided Infographic Fact Sheet is on the right.

Washington State Department of Agriculture FOOD ASSISTANCE

FARM TO FOOD PANTRY INITIATIVE

What is the Farm to Food Pantry?

The Farm to Food Pantry (F2FP) is an initiative that helps provide fresh produce to people struggling to put food on the table, while also promoting the economic growth of local farm operations. The initiative, a partnership between the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) and Rotary First Harvest, provides targeted funding for food pantries to purchase fresh produce from their local farmers, increasing access to healthier food options for food insecure residents of Washington.

What impact is the initiative making?

WSDA has invested \$98,467 over the last five years, with \$77,000 of that going directly to farmers. In addition to WSDA funding, farmers also received \$52,000 in local match and \$348,614 for a grand total of \$130,000 targeted for farm direct purchases. This resulted in food pantries receiving over 350,000 lbs. of purchased, donated and/or gleaned, nutrient dense produce to distribute to food insecure families in the state of Washington.

Want to Learn More?

More details on the initiative, with feedback from the participating food pantries and farmers are included in the 2017 Farm to Food Pantry Report. Visit our Farm to Food Pantry webpage to review past reports and learn more about the initiative at <https://agriculture.wa.gov/foodpantry>.

Next Steps

In 2016, the F2FP initiative has engaged 14 lead agencies (Food Banks, Community Action Councils, and WSDA Extension offices) in 18 counties, contracting with 35 Washington farmers, and distributing fresh produce to 152 food pantries. The size of the initiative is limited by the amount of funding WSDA can expend on this effort. Currently, these funding challenges limit the project to its current size. WSDA intends to not only maintain the initiative, but also to identify growth opportunities to expand throughout the state.

WSDA HARVEST AGAINST HUNGER FARM TO FOOD PANTRY

Farm to Food Pantry is a partnership between WSDA and Harvest Against Hunger

- Supplying fresh produce to those struggling to put food on the table.
- Promoting the economic growth of local farms.
- Providing money for food pantries to buy from local farmers, increasing fresh food options for low-income households.

The 2014 pilot had 3 allies to 8 counties.

22 counties
15 lead agencies
142 pantries served

403,000 clients served by food pantries in the participating counties

For every \$1 invested by WSDA 5 lbs. of produce went to food pantries

2014: 100% STATE FUNDED

2015: 42% STATE FUNDED

2016: 58% STATE FUNDED

SINCE THE 2014 PILOT:

- 190,000** total pounds purchased
- 376,000** total pounds gleaned/donated
- \$1.02** PURCHASED PER LB.
- 39¢** WITH DONATIONS PER LB.

Donations reduce the cost per pound by 62%

PAY GROWERS - REDUCE COST TO FOOD PANTRIES - SERVE MORE CLIENTS

FARM TO FOOD PANTRY SYSTEM

67 farmers participated

84% of farmers surveyed reported some financial benefit from participating.

Food pantries said:

- This program has allowed us to target specific types of produce that would otherwise not enter the emergency food system.
- A homebound food bank client was overwhelmed by the farm fresh produce received.
- We had new clients register as a result of our increased ability to provide produce.

67 farmers participated

- Provided an outlet for what would otherwise go to waste.
- Finding those in need while earning a living wage.
- The upfront CSA payment style is vital and after that we enjoy feeding people in need.
- We were able to pay bills for early season start-up costs, seeds, and fertilizer.
- It gave us the opportunity to leave the farmers market and focus on wholesale.

72% of farmers surveyed reported an annual gross farm income of less than \$100,000 and indicated an average of 13% of income came from Farm to Food Pantry contracts.

FINANCING SOURCES:

- \$130,000** WSDA
- \$208,000** \$ TO WASHINGTON FARMERS
- \$93,000** LOCAL MATCH
- \$13,000** SNAP'S GRANT

Project Details

Date improvement project was initiated: 11/27/2018

Project Contact: Nichole Garden

Email: ngarden@agr.wa.gov

Phone: 360-725-2858

Report reviewed and approved by: Associate Deputy Director Jason Ferrante and Performance and Planning Management Manager Kristin Rondeau