Assessment of Dallas County Food Pantries as Novel Partners for Health Promotion Interventions

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Introduction
Food insecurity is associated with suboptimal health behaviors and outcomes. The potential to partner with food pantries in health promotion interventions is an emerging area of interest. In this study, we explored pantries’ capacity to support onsite health promotion interventions.

Methods
We assessed the feasibility of health promotion interventions at food pantries across Dallas County. All pantries are members of the Crossroads Community Services charitable food distribution network. With support from Robert Wood Foundation and our robust community academic partnership, we conducted participant observation at multiple pantries (n=18) during food distribution days. We observed and documented organization logistics, staff operations, and client relationships. Onsite focus groups (n=7) in English and Spanish explored pantry and client relationships and client receptivity to health promotion activities.

Map of Observed Pantry Sites in Dallas County

Results
Overall, pantries served an average of 158 clients (range: 52-494). Pantries differed in where they were located, facility type and size, how often they distributed food, if they offered services in addition to food, and the population served.

Food Pantry Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pantry Name</th>
<th>Emanuel Community Center</th>
<th>Kingbridge Crossing</th>
<th>Dallas Oak Cliff SDA</th>
<th>Royal Haven Baptist Church</th>
<th>Tyler Street Manor</th>
<th>Forest Green Manor</th>
<th>Dallas Bethlehem Center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Church</td>
<td>DHA</td>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>DHA</td>
<td>Agency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Households served</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Individuals</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of distributions a month</td>
<td>3x/ mo</td>
<td>1x/ mo</td>
<td>1x/ mo</td>
<td>1x/ mo</td>
<td>1x/ mo</td>
<td>1x/ mo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Racial/ethnic Characteristics of Pantry Clients

Conclusions
Food pantries can be a natural point for health education, promotion and research. However, there are key factors that may influence the success of such efforts:

• Staff/volunteer capacity and organization is key to successful adoption of intervention
• Routine inclusion of additional services (i.e. classes, clothing, connection to additional resources) provides critical groundwork for health promotion/research activities
• Pantry flexibility and receptivity is critical to success of potential intervention implementation
• Pantries with strong client relationships will ensure success of future intervention and research

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