

Food Policy Council Meeting Minutes, Wednesday, April 13, 2011:

Miner's Creek Room, Medical Office Building, Frisco

Welcome & Introductions: Co-Chair: Joanna Rybak **Co-Chair:** Jennifer Santry

Present: Erick Becerril, Ethan Mason, Rob Murphy, Deb Price, Joanne Spouse, Emily Tracy, Carolyn Woyar

Social Services Updates

- Summit County Social Services provides a variety of programs for people of all ages from prenatal through senior citizens. Social Services focus principally on vulnerable and at-risk populations, such as low-income families, children in need of protection, the aged, and the disabled. The departmental mission is to assist eligible families/individuals in achieving core needs, such as shelter, food and health care, while working toward the goals of self-sufficiency and independence. The department is swamped and very busy assisting those in need.
- Joanne Spouse and Carolyn Woyar from the Summit County Government Social Services department presented the 2011 1st quarter data and statistics on the Assistance Benefits Programs, General Assistance, Child Support Enforcement and Low Income Energy Assistance. Please see attached data sheet that was given out for detailed information.
- Highlighted data: The Food Assistance program (formerly called Food Stamp program and SNAP – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) monthly caseload increased and was much higher than every quarter in 2010. The monthly caseload was 631 (each case has on average 3 or 4 people) and the cost was \$139,158. The 4th quarter in 2010 had 590 cases and cost \$134,039. Usually, the 4th quarter does tend to go down because of the holidays. Some reasons for the increase in caseload this year maybe that unemployment benefits are running out and there were layoffs.
- As of January 1st, 2011, the federal poverty level guidelines dropped the resource limit of having a savings and asset requirement to receive food assistance benefits. It was dropped so families don't use up their life savings.
- "Colorado Employment First" was discussed. Unfortunately, Summit County is not an "Employment First" county because of lack of funds to hire someone to coordinate the program. "Employment First" increases employment for food assistance participants through support, referrals, accountability, and community work. It is a federally mandated program designed to ensure that all able-bodied food assistance participants are engaged in activities that will improve their employability. The program is administered by the Colorado Department of Human Services, and currently operates in 45 Colorado counties.
- The Food Assistance program in itself is not "self-sufficient" which is why "Employment First" is important to have. Summit County Social Services hope and plan to be able to implement this program one day.
- The Social Services department is rolling out online benefits for food assistance but will still have a face-to-face interview.
- College students have to be working for at least 20 hours to receive food assistance benefits unless you are a single parent with a child under the age of 6.

CARE Council Meeting Update

- FPC co-chairs Joanna & Jen presented to the CARE Council on Monday, March 28 on the 2011 "First Order Priorities" as outlined in the updated 2011 Summit County Basic Food Assistance document. Since the FPC reports to the CARE Council, the CARE Council does have to officially approve the priorities/goals. The CARE Council officially did approve the work plan for 2011! Please see the attached 2011 Summit County Basic Food Assistance document for the "First Order Priorities."
- Some comments from CARE Council members were to work with Safeway and City Market on food recovery efforts; develop policy related to food recovery in the county; publicize the current food recovery efforts at the Village and Mountain Thunder Lodge in Breckenridge; and we were told FPC is doing a "great" job.

Food Recovery

- Joanna informed the group of the successful food recovery programs that Seattle and Portland has but couldn't remember all the details at the meeting so they are being added below to the minutes and will be discussed further in the Food Recovery Task Force group. Seattle has Food Lifeline which is the largest nonprofit food distributor in the state of WA. They solicit, receive, and distribute over 24 million meals of food to nearly 700,000 people through their network of 300+ food banks, shelters and meal programs. They do this through their innovative food gathering programs that secures as much nutritious, wholesome food as possible and by working with a variety of local and national partners:
Seattle's Table collects wholesome, expertly-prepared food from local restaurants, caterers and other food service providers and delivers it the same day to hot meal programs within their network.
Grocery Rescue gathers fresh food and grocery items from local grocery stores, helping to increase the volume and variety of food at our member food banks and meal programs. (CARE Council suggested we work with Safeway & City Market)
Produce for the People collects nutritious, fresh, but unmarketable produce from local wholesalers for distribution to our food banks.

Portland, Oregon - Fork it Over to Reduce Hunger and Waste - Restaurants, caterers and food service companies are fighting hunger and reducing waste through Metro's Fork It Over food donation program. Food that isn't donated is composted.

CORRECTION - Joanna said a Seattle food recovery policy was passed. This was in LA not Seattle. A food recovery policy did pass in LA in an effort to reduce food waste and alleviate hunger. In June 2010, the Los Angeles City Council approved a policy to push city departments to give leftover food from city events to local food pantries.

Comments

- Look into Paonia, CO and their local food system as a resource.

Next Food Policy Meeting: Wednesday, May 11, 2pm to 3:30pm, Miner's Creek Rm, Medical Office Building, Frisco. For past meeting minutes and more information, please go to:

http://www.highcountryconservation.org/sustainable_foods.htm#FPC