**Food Assistance advisory Committee Meeting**

September 23, 2019 • 9:30am-11:00am

Location: Washington Food Coalition Conference, Three Rivers Convention Center, Kennewick, WA

GoTo Meeting option (not recorded)

**In attendance**: Leon Brauner (Ocean Shores Food Bank), Michelle Douglas (Emergency Food Network), Kim Eads (WSDA), Owen Esperas (2nd Harvest), Alan Hamilton (Clark County Food Bank), Scott Kilpatrick (Community Services of Moses Lake), Bob Mark (Upper Valley MEND), Josh Martinez (Food Lifeline), Jeff Mathias (Blue Mountain Action Council), Kyle Merslich (WSDA), Katie Rains (WSDA), Ken Trainor (Sunrise Outreach Center), Kris Van Gasken (Des Moines Area Food Bank), Dawn Yarnell (2nd Harvest)

**Welcome and Intros**: Jeff welcomed the Committee.

**Approval of Minutes**: Minutes were approved.

**Review Work in Progress & Status**:

* Civil Rights Task Force update
  + One meeting since the last FAAC meeting
  + The task force reviewed the USDA civil rights training guidelines and discussed what we could do with each section.
  + Clark County Food Bank says Oregon Food Bank has been in contact with a different person at USDA. OFB is developing a training video, should be ready in October.
  + Other regions are supporting our region's efforts.
  + Katie is connecting with OFB to review their training.
  + No next meeting scheduled.
* Subcontractor Resources Task Force update
  + One meeting since the last FAAC meeting
  + Goal of the task force is to develop tools to help subcontractors understand what's needed before the next audit.
  + Lead contractors are responsible for sharing resources and tools with their subcontractors.
  + Task force agreed that we want to provide a comprehensive manual, but that often gets overlooked. They are instead trying to create individual one-pagers that cover all manual topics. Some topics discussed:
    - Commodity management - limitations to TEFAP/TMP? Inventory management system? Subcontractors want it in writing
    - EFAP FAQ - basics of the program, EFAP process, etc.
  + Next meeting is scheduled on October 15.
* Food Procurement Policy Changes
  + Puts a priority on the economics of purchased food
  + Want to justify higher cost for higher nutrition food, encouraging more diverse range of suppliers, etc.
  + Want to consider other factors than the lowest priced food.
  + Considering creating a new task force for supporting the policy.
  + Existing regulations are in the food procurement section of the EFAP manual.
  + Procedures manual helps people understand what's possible.
  + Decision: we will create an email group to discuss changes to the procurement policy.

**WSDA**

Kim Eads, Program Manager – WSDA Update

* Federal program - issued updated contracts
  + Most of the changes are things we've already seen
  + WSDA is willing to work with contractors to understand these changes
  + "Contracting structures" is new to the TEFAP/CSFP manual
    - Have previously had to track sites that distribute federal food
    - Distributing food does not mean you have to have a subcontract
    - Sponsored sites required subcontracts
    - Contractors can run their own distribution without being a subcontractor too
    - WSDA wants to know every site where TEFAP has been distributed
  + Read the procedures section
  + Changes on the dispute policy requirement
    - Let your subcontractors know what that policy is
* Client intake changes
  + For CSFP there are very specific intake forms - very regimented and standardized
    - New: alternate language request form - contractors complete. They include what they want to use, then WSDA reviews it, and may make modifications to the requirement.
    - WSDA has a list of all the approved forms in case someone issues
  + TEFAP changes
    - Previously, had to get client signature, name, and an address. If a client is homeless, subcontractors can ask them to mark homeless.
    - A contractor submitted a request to remove the signature requirement. USDA told WSDA that a signature is not required (though they prefer it).
    - Do need to have a printed name and address.
    - Comments: clients have expressed an aversion to recording personal information beyond the signature. We should find a way that prevents receipt of TEFAP to be contingent on divulging information. This information could be used against them.
    - Now have an annual individual client intake form, good for 1 year after completion (not based on a federal FY).
    - Also adapted some of WSDA's tools - recently found intake forms that were unacceptable. Some grants require age, some older forms required a SSN.
    - Contractor needs to know what intake forms their subcontractors are using.
* As the state agency responsible for administering the program, WDSA gets to decide what the income guidelines are.
  + Each spring, WSDA receives the federal poverty guidelines, then discusses as a group
  + TEFAP eligibility is currently 185% of poverty level
  + How many people would be added if the number went up to 200%?
  + We are allowed to set the eligibility requirements. Meal programs distributing TEFAP are allowed to distribute without checking income guidelines. A client accessing the meal program is proof enough of need. What are the limitations to applying these same standards to food bank access?
  + We don't have access to data about average income of our clients (whether an increase would be helpful).
  + If Jan/Feb decision, we'd work towards educating clients and contractor, then updated income requirements would come out in April.
* TEFAP funding
  + Still unsure about how much we'll receive from legislature.
  + TEFAP advocacy piece - can we as a body send a letter to our legislators?
    - We have had sign-on letters in the past.
* Forms and alternative formats - there are Spanish-language forms in the works.
  + WSDA recently used a translation service, not sure how accurate they are.
  + Also creating a Russian language service.

**Legislative Updates**

* Department of Agriculture is launching a focus on food initiative
* Bringing into focus all the food systems that WSDA strives to support, including the emergency food system
* Farm to Food Pantry initiative - has not had sustainable funding, but has been well-documented over its five years
* WSDA has five policy asks to the governor’s office for the 2020 short session:
  1. Requesting we change the agency name to WA Dept of Agriculture and Food
  2. Requesting funds to make Farm to Food Pantry a permanent program and scale it statewide
  3. Requesting additional funding for regional markets program (farm to school and other market development support for small farms)
  4. Healthy Soils Initiative - quality of soil health and how it relates to human health
  5. Statewide branding program - used to have a "WA Grown program" - requesting funds to develop state branding program with opportunity for additional local branding programs
* Food Waste Reduction effort
  + Katie is leading a session tomorrow to discuss
  + School share, grocery rescue, foodservice rescue, also gathering concerns, hopes and suggestions for a food waste reduction plan
  + This is the start to a group convening every other month until the statewide food waste reduction plan is developed and adopted in 2020

**Discussion Topics**

New committee member recruitment

Categorical eligibility for backpack programs

* Added categorical eligibility to the manual
* Also put into the state plan
* Decision points: should be working with OSPI (runs school lunch program) to get all their forms updated
* OSPI has a template they provide each school district that asks about programs the district is interested in
  + Want to think long-term about having the statewide template ask the district about the backpack program.
  + What do we have to do to lobby OSPI to change their template?
    - Kim will send out the samples that OSPI uses now
    - Need to know how it should be modified - then Kim will work with OSPI
    - Josh will reach out to Aaron and Amanda to talk about adding the backpack program standardization
    - Michelle will contact Northwest Harvest to add this to their list

Categorical Eligibility for SNAP

* Current income percentage for SNAP is 200% of poverty line
* If someone has an EBT card, what if they could show that card and automatically qualify them for TEFAP?
* We'd need to align the guidelines among the programs
* Categorical eligibility for schools, but not for SNAP (too complicated to work with SNAP at this time)
* Kim will reach out to the SNAP program manager. Will share what she learns with the advisory group by email.

TEFAP income eligibility changes

* Discussed moving it from 185% to 200%.

**Anything else for the Good of the order?**

* Kim Eads shared updated incoming food list
  + For people receiving pork patties in Oct-Dec, the October shipment was canceled, will be moving to Dec.
  + If your organization receives USDA direct shipments, you won't receive anything later than December 18.
* Plenary session on Wednesday
  + Big picture, then dive into EFAP process during a breakout
  + Want to see if improvements can be made to EFAP
* The next meeting will be in the morning on September 23, 2019.

**Meeting CLOSED at 10:45 am**