

## **Cumberland County Food Security Council Notes**

**Thursday, August 11, 2016, 9:30-11:30 am**

**UME Coop Extension, 75 Clearwater Drive, Falmouth, ME**

Attending: Mary Turner, Kathy Savoie, Dawud Ummah, Judy Gatchell, Jan Bindas-Tenney, Jim Hanna

We began the meeting with the following *Desired Outcomes*

*By the end of the meeting, we will have:*

- Reviewed agenda and why we are here
- Learned how CCFSC survey respondents and meeting attendees prioritize engaging food insecure people in solving hunger and poverty.
- Reviewed capacities identified and resources to support struggling people in solving hunger.
- Decided next steps in engaging with poor folks to solve hunger.
- Confirmed dates for next meetings

After introductions, we reminded ourselves why the Council was created and why we choose to maintain it. CCFSC is not here to create more work for anybody. Our purpose is to take on shared initiatives that we agree need to be addressed and that are bigger than any single member can address on their own.

In the June CCFSC meeting we discussed what it would mean to engage with people suffering food insecurity in solutions to poverty. Jim thought it would be useful to survey Council members about their interest and capacity to engage collectively in such a project.

The survey responses are added as an appendix to these notes. Generally, respondents were supportive of and consider it a priority to work with food insecure people to develop shared responses to hunger and poverty.

Mary talked about the learning what works for poor people, not just in pantry access, but in making their life easier.

Jan organizes leadership among people directly experiencing poverty. We can reach out through pantries to identify people currently emerging as leaders. Someone has to be responsible for building each relationship with care and attention. If each group has a handful of folks we are working we could bring everyone together in a meeting to discuss solutions. If we are going to develop a shared strategy, all involved will need connect with constituents and clients. Jan suggested an organizing training that Council members would bring two or three people to.

Dawud asked, “How did we put people into poverty?” How did we create a society that is creating economic inequality? How do we deconstruct that? What beyond policy work can do that? Can we support communities with resources to develop their own food sovereignty? How does public/popular education fit into solving this problem?

Kathy said Coop Ext is required to hire people “indigenous to the target population” as staff for the Eat Well program. Her current staff has 40 years of experience working in community.

There was agreement that an organizing training would be an effective step in building our capacity for better community engagement. It would increase Council members knowledge of privilege and oppression. It would also help us achieve some shared understandings and clear definitions of what we mean by certain words and ideas as we work together.

Another important step is to agree on ways to measure our shared progress. Benchmarks and targets build in accountability.

There was a request to send out a list of current Council members. It will accompany these notes.

## Meeting Notes Appendix: Survey Monkey Questions and Responses

There were 10 responses to the survey as follows:

Does your organization involve people experiencing hunger and poverty in its work? 8 yes 2 no

Is it a priority is it to involve people experiencing hunger and poverty in your organization's work? 8 yes 2 no

Is your organization interested in involving more people experiencing hunger and poverty in its work? 10 yes

In what ways would you like to involve people suffering hunger and poverty in your work? 8 responses

-as volunteers

-Focus groups to gather information about what obstacles people face & what solutions they would like to see.

-Engaging them and getting input and reflections without having them feel like Guinea pigs. Having them involved in the work of and part of running the food pantries.

-Food collection and distribution, gardening.

-Help them to gain self-sufficiency skills to better meet their food needs to improve their nutrition and well-being.

-We already do this and want to continue to build our capacity for people experiencing hunger and poverty to take leadership in our organizing and strategy work.

-offer employment opportunities and learn how to better listen to what these peoples' needs are and trust in their suggestions.

-Asking them what their needs are to get out of being food insecure.

Is your organization interested in participating in a collective effort to involve people experiencing hunger and poverty in solving hunger and poverty? 7 yes 1 no

Should CCFSC lead such an effort? 3 yes 2 no

What resources would you bring to such an effort? (E.g., staff time, stipends for low-income people, travel reimbursements, child care, maintaining a list, outreach, providing and managing individual engagement opportunities, other ideas). 9 responses

-not sure

-Beyond attending CCFSC meetings on a monthly basis and offering support as fiscal sponsor, we do not have a lot of excess capacity to offer.

-Cumberland County, within budget constraints, would consider an appropriation fo funds for this purpose.

-Outreach, some admin,

-We are limited in our staff time and financial resources now, but this is something a volunteer could help with.

-Staff time, skills, research, etc...

-Unsure at this time. We have limited resources.

-I'm not a decision maker in terms of money and staff time but I would think if suggestions were made, leadership would incorporate these into Cultivating Community's work.

-Staff time, grant writing, outreach, sustaining collaboration between groups working on this.

Other tasks TBD

Organizations providing responses:

Wayside

Good Shepherd Food Bank

Cumberland County Government

MidCoast Hunger Prevention Project

Locker Project

Preble Street Maine Hunger Initiative

Dawud Ummah

Cultivating Community

Maine Food Strategy

Anonymous