STRATEGIES FOR HEALTHIER AND CULTURALLY RELEVANT FOOD AT KING COUNTY FOOD BANKS

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The food bank and emergency food system in the United States requires rethinking. Northwest Harvest, a food bank distributor and anti-hunger organization in King County is transforming emergency food by moving away from a charity model to a social justice model. One of the ways this organization is moving to a social justice model is by providing healthier, lower sodium and more culturally relevant food and support.

Objectives

- Create a buying guide to help make food bank leads and procurement directors more nutrition savvy shoppers
- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of cultural humility and anti-racism at an anti-hunger organization
- Create picture-based recipes to be used by food bank clients of all language and literacy backgrounds
- Design donor material templates that highlight culturally relevant food

Methods and Approach

Healthy and Low Sodium Buying Guide

- Attended meetings with South King County Food Coalition and the Procurement Director at Northwest Harvest. Learned about the wholesale procurement buying process at and the Emergency Food Assistance Plan reimbursement process
- Reviewed, cleaned, and tagged data. 50 food items were identified, and each was entered into a spreadsheet and tagged based on program, food bank location, grocery store name (if applicable), category, product, packaging, brand, and online nutrition information (if available)

Results

Healthy and Low Sodium Buying Guide

- The final product is a six-page guide with shopping suggestions for 35 commonly purchased food bank items
- The buying guide was presented to Northwest Harvest and the CDC Low Sodium team. The buying guide will be used by food bank managers for smaller more regular purchases and by procurement leads for bulk and wholesale purchases

Snapshot of Healthy and Low Sodium Buying Guide

Picture Based Recipes

- Conducted informational survey calls with food bank and food coalition managers to learn about recipe needs
- Designed three picture-based recipes using split peas: a basic split pea soup, a West African inspired version, and a Vietnamese inspired version
- Observed and surveyed clients at three food banks in King County

Culturally Relevant Donor Material Templates

- Requested donor material samples from food bank partners and surveyed their needs

Picture Based Recipes: Split Pea Soup

Ingredients

- 6 cups water
- 1 cup split peas
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 large pot

Donor Material Template Example

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