Food Access & Health Work Group

The Food Access & Health Work Group (FAHWG) is a vibrant statewide network focused on cultivating a diverse and just food system that eliminates hunger, increases access to nutritious food and advances the health of all Iowans.

www.IowaFoodSystemsCouncil.org/food-access-health/

Funding for the FAHWG has been provided by The Wellmark Foundation, WK Kellogg Foundation and the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture.
Benefits of Food Gardening

- Improves access to healthful food and food security
- Increases physical activity
- Improves mental health and quality of life
- Stronger family bonds
- Healthier food environments
- Enhances school curriculum
- Enriched civic engagement and social capital
- Increased property values
- Improves conservation and biodiversity
Social Marketing

- Seeks to influence social behaviors not to benefit the marketer, but to benefit the target audience and the general society
- Primary focus is on the consumer and learning what people want and need rather than trying to persuade them to buy something

Encourage more Iowans to garden
Encourage Iowa gardeners to donate produce

Iowa Food Gardening Social Marketing Initiative

1. Concept & Funding
2. Assessment
3. Message Development
4. Campaign Launch
5. Implementation
6. Evaluation
Social-Ecological Model

- Policy
- Community
- Organizations
- Household
- Individual
Assessment

FAHWG Partners
- Food gardening and produce donation activities

Food Pantries
- Produce acceptance and donation practices
- Partnered with Iowa Food Bank Association

Low-resource Iowans
- Food gardening knowledge, attitude and behaviors
- Partnered with nine organizations

Food Gardeners
- Food gardening donation practices
- Partnered with ISU Master Gardener Program
Gardening Activities
• 74% participated in gardening activities
• Challenges were lack of staff/volunteers and budget
• Outreach, recruiting, basic gardening information, and collaboration would help agencies expand gardening activities

Produce Donation
• Half were engaged in produce donation activities
• Barriers were lack of informational resources and knowledge
• Biggest external challenge is lack of awareness
• Advocacy, information about donation, and encouraging messages would help agencies to expand produce donation activities
Almost everyone is interested in food for the hungry.

There is a lot of willingness of individuals to grow their own food

It’s contagious, seeing donations by others leads to donations.

Keep fresh produce simple.

Zucchini is a gateway drug to donation :) once you get growers hooked on how good donating feels, they will find other produce to share as well.
Food Pantry Staff/Volunteers

• Focus groups with 30 emergency food providers
• Knowledge seen as a barrier to healthy food consumption
  o Healthy eating messages are a major need in Emergency Feeding Network (EFN)
  o Lack of knowledge of food gardening
• All accept fresh produce when available
  o Most produce is available a few months a year
  o Accept produce from a variety of sources
  o Concerns about providing healthy eating messages when there is a lack of fresh and healthy foods
Food Pantry Food Pantry
Staff/Volunteers

- Positive responses from clients regarding fresh produce
- Challenges to distributing produce include time to distribution and spoilage

“It never gets left behind, and that’s very promising. Families definitely want it.”

Food Pantry
Open
10 AM - 12 Noon
Low-Resource Iowans

• One in six are food insecure
• Younger respondents more likely to worry about not able to pay household bills
• One in four gets food from a food pantry
• Six in ten used WIC or food assistance to purchase fruits and vegetables
  o Three in five did not know that food assistance (SNAP) could be used to purchase vegetable plants and seeds
Reasons for Not Eating Enough Fruits and Vegetables

- They cost too much
- I don't have a garden
- They spoil too quickly
- I don't think about eating more
- Other people don't like them
- They do not taste good
- They take too much time to prepare
- I can't easily get to stores that sell them
- The person that cooks doesn't prepare them
- The food assistance I get doesn't provide them
- I don't have tools to prepare
Perspectives on Gardening

• Seven in ten were somewhat interested in food gardening
• Almost 80% know someone who gardens
• Feel very positive about produce
  o 98% feel positive about eating fruits and vegetables
  o 75% feel positive about growing their own food
• Over half would like to learn about growing fruits and vegetables
• Garden in many types of areas
  o 83% home yard
  o 14% container
  o 15% ground space away from home
Do You Currently Grow Any Fruits or Vegetables?

No

Yes

Not now, but in the past

Do you currently grow any vegetables or fruit?
- Yes
- Not right now, but I have in the past
- No, Never
Why Do You Garden?

- To do something I enjoy
- To eat foods I grew up with
- To have healthy food
- To have better tasting food
- To save money
- To be physically active
- To be outside
- To have food to share
- To spend time with others
- To freeze or can food
Gardeners

• People garden for personal enjoyment, health and better tasting food
• 27% donate garden produce to a food assistance program
• Some gardeners had never thought of produce donation

“It is a great idea and this survey actually brought this option to my attention.”

• Concerns include:
  o Client ability to use produce
  o Timeliness of distribution
  o Food safety liability

• Most would plant more if there was a food assistance program to accept produce donations
• Convenience encourages people to donate
Do you know if your local food assistance programs will accept donations of fresh produce?

- Yes - they will accept fresh produce
- No, they will not accept fresh produce
- I don't know
- Other (please specify)
• **Partners** are excited about gardening, but lack resources.

• **Food pantries** want more produce to support healthy eating messages, and because families want it.

• **Low-resource Iowans** face economic challenges to accessing healthy food. They have a moderate interest in gardening, but think they need a lot of space, time and money to garden, and they don’t have the resources to start.

• **Gardeners** do not know they can donate produce to their local food pantries, but are positive about the idea.

iowafoodsystemscouncil.org/food-gardening/
Campaign Strategy

• Inspire people in a fun and empowering tone that they can garden. They don’t need a lot of space, time or money. You don’t need a green thumb to yield big savings.

• Inform gardeners that donation is wanted and needed at their local food banks and to set a goal for themselves to donate.
Creative team

Jason Boucher  
VP Client Service  
ZLRIGNITION

Joel Brewer  
Account Executive  
Meredith

Brett Burkhart  
CEO & UX Designer  
Slash/ Web Studios

Adam Feller  
Graphic Designer  
Avidity Creative

Andy Hewitt  
PR Account Coordinator  
Strategic America

Katie Holl  
Owner  
Holl Marketing Services

Lisa Lewis  
Owner  
Lewis Consulting

Lori Strum  
Sr. Media Planner  
Strategic America

Phil Schriver  
Designer  
Red Dot Advertising
CULTIVATE IOWA

Promoting the benefits of food gardening and produce donation to create a sustainable future and healthier community in Iowa.

PLANT. GROW. SAVE.

SPROUTING APRIL 19
Campaign Materials

- Brochure
- Posters
- Postcard
- Emails
- Social Media
- Website
- Traditional Media
- Marketing Guide
- Press Release
- Seeds
Available in English and Spanish.
Posters

- Five posters with various messages were distributed in English and Spanish.
E-Media

- Email campaign
- Facebook and Twitter
- The website
  - 89 pledges to donate produce this fall
Billboards

• Four billboards were created and placed across the state

• Messages target both low resource Iowans and gardeners
Newspaper Ads

Ads were sent to dozens of newspapers across the state
Other Campaign Activities

• Radio and TV ads
• ISUEO Safe Produce Handling Guide
• Ampleharvest.org promotion
• Informational webinars
• Quarterly FAHWG gatherings
• Promotional items
• Seed distribution
Value of Partnerships

- $30,000 investment with AAF of Des Moines
- All services and products donated

- Marketing Services
- Paper
- Printing
- Canvas bags
- Seeds
- Media (TV, radio)
- Signage
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tr>
<td>Donated Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donated Production</td>
<td>$5,105</td>
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<td>Donated Seeds</td>
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<td>Donated Media</td>
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<td>Campaign Investment</td>
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- **Total Campaign Value**: $1,450,914
Campaign Evaluation

**FAHWG Partners**
- Use of Cultivate Iowa materials
- Opportunities for next season

**Low-resource Iowans**
- Exposure to Cultivate Iowa
- Gardening practices this season

**Food Gardeners**
- Exposure to Cultivate Iowa
- Produce donation practices this season
FAHWG Partners

82% used Cultivate Iowa materials

Materials were distributed to local agencies with a webinar to provide explanation of use. Many agencies put together kits for clients.

An article about Cultivate Iowa was put into our newsletter distributed to our network.

Posters were hung in county offices, and seeds distributed to Master Gardeners.
FAHWG Partners

- **Most effective materials:**
  - Poster
  - Postcards
  - Brochure
  - Seeds
  - Social media

- **Least used materials:**
  - Newspaper ads
  - Billboards
  - TV and Radio ads
FAHWG Partners

Who did you target for promotion?

- Clients: 23%
- Community leaders: 18%
- Other organizations: 18%
- General community: 20%
- Policy makers: 8%
- Other: 15%
Food Gardeners

- 70% were somewhat or extremely likely to recommend Cultivate Iowa as a resource.

Have you donated garden produce?

- In the past: 20%
- This year: 60%

Learn where you can donate fresh produce at www.cultivateiowa.org
Gardeners in action
Low Resource Iowans

Those who saw Cultivate Iowa were more likely to:
• Refer to Cultivate Iowa next spring
• Recommend it to others
• Have planted a garden this year
• Have considered planting a garden this year
• Plan to plant a garden next year
• Plan to donate produce to a food pantry next year
Low Resource Iowans

• Low resource Iowans who garden thought:
  – They saved money by planting a garden (86%)
  – Their household ate more produce by planting a garden (90%)

• Only half who accessed a food pantry received fresh produce through this resource
Evaluation Results

- Diversity of resources
- Digital media to target gardeners
- Print media to target low-resource Iowans
- Community partnerships to reinforce messaging
- Resources leveraged
Next Steps

• Sustainability
• Partnerships
• Focused communication with FAHWG partners
• Deeper reach with low-resource Iowans and gardeners
• Spring launch
Thank You!

Betsy Danforth Richey, MPH, PhD
betsdanforth@gmail.com

Angie Tagtow, MS, RD, LD
angie.tagtow@mac.com

www.Cultivatelowa.org
www.IowaFoodSystemsCouncil.org