Food and Libraries
NOPREN Presentation
September 16, 2021

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(April 22, 2021) HIGH POINT, North Carolina — “The Greater High Point Food Alliance awarded more than $58,400 in Food Security Fund grants to 17 local nonprofits. The awards were announced Thursday during a press conference at the High Point Public Library teaching garden, one of the grant recipients.”

Up to now, what have been your experiences working with *public* libraries or librarians around food and food-related initiatives, of any sort?
Americans love (and fund) libraries for three reasons:

1. Transformative potential of reading
2. Useful nature of information
3. Community building capacity of public space
### When in Doubt, Go to the Library

Number of times a person said they visited/attended each activity in the U.S. in 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movie</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sporting Event</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music/Theater Event</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casino</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoo</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scores are based on the average respondent's answer.

Source: Gallup

More voters today say it’s important for the library to be a community hub.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activities, entertainment not found elsewhere</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be a place for people to gather and socialize</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support civic discourse and community building</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

• 17,000 public library locations, 9,000 administrative entities
  • e.g. Chicago Public Library is 1 entity with over 70 branch locations
• ca. 90% of funding is from local sources
• Administration
  • Municipal government – 53%
  • County or parish government – 10%
  • Library district/independent taxing authority – 15%
  • Non-profit – 14%
What a great day for gardening! Jessica and her son Patrick came to the Walkertown Branch library today to harvest sweet potatoes from their plot and to plant collards for the Fall. They enjoy being part of the Library Community Garden. Library is for growing!
How Toronto Public Library branches are becoming food banks during COVID-19

The Daily Bread Food Bank's clients have increased by 53 per cent, now Toronto libraries are stepping up to open their doors and offer space ...

Apr 11, 2020
Emerging model: Summer meals

Why Libraries and Summer Meals?

Why More Public Libraries Are Doubling As Food Distribution Hubs

Efforts that ramped up during the pandemic have succeeded thanks to partnerships with school districts, food banks and other ...

nextcity.org

Benefits To The Library:

Access to new groups, especially underserved and marginalized populations.

Increased visibility of the library as a community asset.

Opportunities for new partnerships.

Support for summer library program through increased attendance.

What’s Needed?*

- Staff and/or volunteers.
- Designated room or space, inside or outside.
- A sponsor.

*There are also eligibility guidelines for the USDA Summer Food Service Program. See the USDA and CSLP links for details.

Getting Started

- Establish room or space to use.
- Determine what days and hours to serve and which meals to serve.
- Find a sponsor.
- Complete training and any paperwork.

Helpful Links

https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-food-service-program
https://www.cslpreads.org/libraries-and-summer-food/
HUNGER DOESN'T TAKE A VACATION: SUMMER NUTRITION STATUS REPORT

June 2003

Food Research and Action Center
1875 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 540
Washington, D.C. 20009
Tel: 202-986-2200
http://www.frac.org

“Once you feed a hungry child, everything else pales in comparison.”

Public Library SFSP director, Nelsonville, OH

Summer meals

Total library meal sites in USDA SFP was 2,018 in 2019. 1,483 in 2021. **Source: USDA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>2019 Library sites #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OH</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TX</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KY</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TN</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library Meal Sites Per capita</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Vermont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Kentucky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 District of Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 West Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Kansas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Maine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Alaska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Tennessee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 South Carolina</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Food education through partnerships

The University of South Carolina (USC) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) team is recruiting public libraries to work with on implementing nutrition supports to increase access to healthy eating among customers/patrons.

Selected libraries will receive ongoing technical assistance on selecting, implementing, evaluating, and sustaining nutrition support strategies.

What do nutrition supports look like in libraries?

- Host a farmers’ market that accepts SNAP as a form of payment
- Create a produce garden
- Improve transportation options for customers/patrons to and from the library
- Designate a comfortable, safe space for breastfeeding
- ...and MORE!

If you are interested in implementing nutrition supports at your library, please complete this brief interest form:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BBF2RK9

For questions, please contact:
Ashley Page, MSW
pagea@mailbox.sc.edu

SNAP-Ed is a program created to support SNAP’s role in improving nutrition and preventing or reducing diet-related chronic disease and obesity among low-income populations. This project is funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – SNAP.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Charlie Cart food literacy programs teach more than just cooking at your local library.

For kids 8-12: cook and eat your own food!

Registration is required
Call/email Abby Davis

Food Bank of Delaware

Kid Chef

Tuesdays in July,
11:00 am
*not July 16*
Continuing partnerships during COVID-19

#HealthyAtHome Gardening Club

McCracken County Public Library #HealthyAtHome Gardening Group

Contact Library Pick Up services at 715-839-5066 or Community Resource Services at 715-839-5061 or libbyr@eauclaire.lib.wi.us to schedule a food pick up.

Curb Hunger
Free weekly food bags for individuals and families

Library Pick Up
Ready to eat meals for those without kitchen access will be available to pick up without an appointment on Tuesdays and Fridays from 9am-10am or by special request at the Lower Level Library Pick Up Location.

A partnership between: Feed My People Food Bank, L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library
Increasingly scholarly interest

Community Health and Wellness: Small and Rural Library Practices, Perspectives, and Programs

Geographic distribution of the research team, advisory board, and public libraries participating in the research

Graphic Credit: Ginny Schneider, Abbie Rose, Rebecca Floyd

The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA
School of Library and Information Studies
Ellen L. Rubenstein & Susan K. Burke

UNC GREENSBORO
Department of Library & Information Science
Noah Lenstra

WAYNE STATE
School of Information Sciences
Christine D’Arpa

HEAL (Healthy Eating and Active Living) at the Library via Co-Developed Programming

Geographic distribution of case study communities

This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, LG-18-19-0015-19

UNCG
Department of Library & Information Science
Noah Lenstra

This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, RE-246336-OLS-20
Methods: Food-specific partnerships

- Three rural communities
- 19 semi-structured interviews with public librarians and partners, recorded in-person or Zoom from Dec. 2019 to Nov. 2020
- Interviewees include: Library directors (5), Other librarians (5), School Nutrition Services (2), Extension agents (2), and (all 1) Boys & Girls Club, Health Department, Health Foundation, Parks & Recreation, Food Bank
- Open coding for themes – exploratory analysis
Findings

Community Collaboration

Reaching Audiences

Daily Efforts of Library Staff
“If we need something accomplished, or [if] we need to fall back on somebody, the library is always there: They can offer a program we won't be able to [offer]. They have the ability to reach out. There is a pervasive sense in the community, that if we need something done as it concerns health initiatives or programs, they [the library] will always, always have the back of the department.”
“There is a community garden in town … They're struggling. They don't have a lot of resources, and this grant project will help them establish their garden to where it needs to be for us [the library] to offer these [health] classes. They're going to be one of our partners on this project. We have been talking with them about what they need … to be successful, for them to be in a position to be able to offer the foundation, or the infrastructure, to offer these classes”
“COVID changed things a little bit. But typically, [the library] will run the Summer Food Program, and then move right into an after-school program, [offering] suppers …. We thought [this expansion of summer meals] was a great opportunity because it provided more opportunity for kids to get a larger portion, but also a good nutritious meal, no matter what they got when they went home [after school].”
“We had to totally revamp our summer reading program this year …. What we did was put together kits for the families to take home: Craft kits. The Market Bucks were in that kit, and I usually included a recipe that the family could make together. Each family gets five Market Bucks per child – it's basically a little business card – and then they can use that at the Farmers Market or the Fresh Food Van for fresh vegetables and things like that.”
“But [the librarian] kind of ignited something within me. [She showed me] that ‘Hey, libraries can do this thing!’ That was the first ‘light-bulb-going-off’ [moment], when I heard her talk [about what librarians do] …. That was the first time I thought, ‘Wow, you know, we could probably do more [with the library], because people trust the library.’”
Findings: Daily efforts, Librarian POV

“[The role of librarians is] encouraging children and families to improve their lives as best they can. I mean really and truly, whether it's through reading, whether it's through finding new information about parenting, connecting them with resources in the community. It's really [all] about helping them improve themselves and their situation.”
Discussion: Limitations and next steps

- This research focuses on the back-end: The behind-the-scenes community collaboration that enables rural librarians to participate in community food systems.
- More needed on outcomes from these partnerships.
- More needed to assess how widespread these partnerships have become, and how they compare across geographies.
FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

• What have you heard that is new to you?
• What do you think is needed to better understand this topic?
• What do you think is needed to better integrate public libraries into community food systems research and policy?

Other ideas? Share them in the chat window.
Thank you!

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