

SNAP-Ed Toolkit

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Voices for Food (VFF)

South Dakota State University Extension, Michigan State University Extension, Ohio State University Extension, Purdue University, University of Missouri Extension, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension

Overview

Voices for Food (VFF) is a PSE change intervention designed to enhance food security in diverse rural communities with high poverty rates, utilize community coaches to develop new or provide support to existing food councils, and encourage policy changes in local food pantries that increase the availability of healthy foods. VFF focuses on the engagement of community coaches with communities to achieve intervention objectives while utilizing VFF materials. Community coaches address food system issues by focusing on local food policy and making environmental changes, such as community gardens, aiding the food pantry in obtaining more space, and working on other issues of food security. Community coaches work collaboratively with food pantries to make PSE changes that transition to a client choice model of distribution (MyChoice) and offer the VFF Ambassador's training, which includes nutrition education, cultural competency training, and food safety training. **Target Behavior:** Healthy Eating, Food Insecurity/Food Assistance **Intervention Type:** PSE Change

Intervention Reach and Adoption

VFF targets food pantry clients, parents, adults, and older adults in rural, high poverty communities and food pantries with varying ethnicities and races. VFF was tested in 24 (12 treatment, 12 comparison) rural, high poverty counties in South Dakota (included 2 reservation communities), Indiana, Missouri, Michigan, Nebraska, and Ohio and reached approximately 1,600 food pantry clients in 24 communities. VFF selected communities that already had a Cooperative Extension presence to allow for the work to continue after the grant was completed and to promote sustainability. Participating communities had a high percentage of people who were Hispanic/Latino, American Indian, Black or African American, and White. **Setting:** Community (Live), Food pantries, Indian Tribal Organizations **Target Audience:** Parents/Mothers/Fathers, Adults, Older Adults, Homeless/Food Pantry Clients

Race/Ethnicity: American Indian or Alaskan Native, Black or African American, White, Hispanic/Latino, and Non-Hispanic/Latino

Intervention Components

VFF includes community coaching and VFF materials. These intervention components guide the development and strengthening of food councils and the successful transition to a client choice model of food pantry distribution, which could ultimately lead to long-term improved food security. It is recommended that the components noted above be utilized together and not modified. However, VFF recognizes that communities may be at varying levels of readiness to implement the intervention. Community coaches and VFF materials offer solutions to meet the needs of communities where they are in terms of readiness. Training options in the materials can be tailored to each state/community. The trainings offered serve as a critical education piece that can begin the conversation surrounding food security and food issues in the community. The Food Council Scorecard and MyChoice Pantry Scorecard measure the degree of implementation of the intervention and directly correspond with the Food Council Creation Guide and Food Pantry Toolkit. The Food Council Scorecard and MyChoice Pantry Scorecard were designed to be completed prior to implementation in order to establish a baseline, and then used periodically thereafter to measure progress in implementing the intervention.

Intervention Materials

VFF intervention materials, which will be web-accessible in the near future, include:

- Executive Summary
- Food Council Creation Guide
- Food Pantry Toolkit
- Food Council Scorecard
- MyChoice Pantry Scorecard

The Food Council Scorecard and MyChoice Pantry Scorecard accompany the guide and toolkit to serve as a practical, simple assessment tools.

Intervention Costs

Materials available at no cost.

Evidence Summary

VFF utilized a longitudinal matched intervention and comparison evaluation plan design that tested all levels of the intervention, including how well it serves the target audience and fits into the intended setting. At the community level and pantry levels, a Food Council Scorecard and MyChoice Pantry Scorecard were developed, tested and used to assess the degree of implementation of the intervention. The results of both scorecards allowed the project team to assess the differences between treatment and comparison communities, which ultimately show that the VFF intervention was effective in helping communities develop new or strengthen existing food councils and transition to MyChoice. These results were used to update and finalize the VFF intervention and VFF materials.

Outcome evaluation of VFF showed that post-intervention, the proportion of food-insecure pantry clients was significantly lower in treatment versus comparison pantries (57% vs 64%, p=.003). Food insecurity did not differ between control and intervention pantry clients pre-intervention. Publications on VFF can be found online: ? [Voices for food: methodologies for implementing a multi-state community-based intervention in rural, high poverty communities](#) ? [Chronic Health Condition Influences on Client Perceptions of Limited or Non-choice Food Pantries in Low-income, Rural Communities](#) ? [Daily Dietary Intake Patterns Improve after Visiting a Food Pantry among Food-Insecure Rural Midwestern Adults](#) **Evidence-based Approach:** Research-tested

Evaluation Indicators

Based on the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework, the following outcome indicators can be used to evaluate intervention progress and success.

	Readiness and Capacity – Short Term (ST)	Changes – Medium Term (MT)	Effectiveness and Maintenance – Long Term (LT)	Population Results (R)
Individual				<u>R6</u>
Environmental Settings	<u>ST5</u> , <u>ST6</u>		<u>LT5</u> , <u>LT9</u>	
Sectors of Influence			<u>LT12</u>	

- ST5b,c: Twelve sites conducted a needs assessment in which the results documented needs for changes in PSE supports. Twenty-four sites were assessed for organizational readiness for change.
- ST6a: Twelve champions advanced SNAP-Ed activities by providing leadership, promoting collaborations, and engaging in advocacy as a result of the intervention.
- LT5c: Eleven sites made at least one PSE change, and showed improvement in the degree of food council implementation via the Food Council Scorecard and degree of MyChoice implementation via the MyChoice Pantry Scorecard.
- ST8a-d: Eleven food policy councils were formed and active from 2014-2019 with diverse representation from food systems sectors including food pantries, grocers, health departments, Extension, local businesses, food pantry clients, and more as a result of the intervention.
- LT9b: Throughout 24 sites, both treatment and comparison, approximately \$187,106.00 in mini-grant funds were awarded to participating communities.
- LT12a,h: Eleven food pantry councils conducted new activities specifically addressing the unique food system disparities within the selected counties as a result of the intervention. Eleven food pantries changed the system of offering to a guided-client choice model from a traditional pantry model as a result of the intervention.
- R6a: Pre-intervention, the proportion of food insecure pantry clients did not differ between treatment and comparison pantries (76% vs 79%, respectively; p=.21). Post-intervention, the proportion of food insecure pantry clients was significantly lower in treatment versus comparison pantries (57% vs 64%, p=.003).

Evaluation Materials

Evaluation materials include the Food Council Scorecard and MyChoice Pantry Scorecard. These tools measure the degree of intervention implementation. Both Scorecards are intended to be completed prior to implementation to establish a baseline and then periodically thereafter in order to measure progress. The questions in the scorecards receive answers of yes, not fully, and no and receive numeric points of 2, 1, and 0 and then a total score. The scorecards can be used to identify opportunities for the councils and pantries.

Additional Information

Website: The [VFF website](#) includes information on South Dakota State University Extension programs and research. **Contact Person(s):** Becky Henne 517-543-4468 henner@msu.edu