



Food Access & Literacy Work Group Meeting Notes

Fairfax Food Council

February 28, 2024

10:30 am – 11:30 am

Food & Friends: Medically Tailored Meals

Casey Dyson, Government Relations & Public Funding Director

Casey discussed the history of Food & Friends and provided an overview of their programs and services. Beginning as a meal delivery program for clients living with HIV/AIDS, Food & Friends has evolved into a meal delivery service for clients with a variety of chronic illnesses, including Cancer, Renal Disease, Parkinson's, and COPD. Food & Friends prepares and delivers medically tailored meals and groceries, provides nutritional counseling, and creates a sense of community for their clients and volunteers. They service areas in Virginia, Maryland, and DC. This is just a snapshot of the impact they are having on their clients in these areas.

In 2023, we provided 1.9 million medically tailored meals to 5,500 clients. Since starting on service, *



90% of clients report **improved health**



81% of clients report that they are better able to **follow doctor's orders**



73% of clients report improved **mental health**/decreased stress



44% of clients reported we were their **only source of food**



81% of clients report they are able to achieve/maintain a **healthy weight**



73% of clients report better able to **manage chronic conditions**

*based on 2023 Client Survey results

[See their attached presentation to learn more.](#) [Click here to view their FY23 Stats.](#)

1115 Waivers Update

Gillian Kimura, FA&LWG Co-Chair

Gill provided an update on 1115 Waivers. There have been recent policy shifts to better address services that address Social Determinants of Health. Among those changes are Medicaid's 1115 Waivers. This waiver allows states to test new approaches to Medicaid service delivery and financing. Good for 5 years, this waiver is currently the best and broadest policy opportunity to increase access to Food is Medicine services. States across the country have leveraged 1115 waivers to allow for time-limited reimbursement for a wide spectrum of Food is Medicine interventions. The current Virginia budget amendment language was not included in either the house or senate budget. The Federation is exploring short-term alternatives. [See the attached presentation to learn more.](#)

School Composting Pilot Program Update – Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth Grant Project

Elisa Solomon, FFC Project Coordinator

Elisa discussed the purpose of this project and the progress that has been made. This pilot program aims to help schools reduce food waste by teaching students how to repurpose trash-bound scraps. At present, the Food Council is in the interview phase of the application process, where schools can discuss their implementation plans more thoroughly.

The Fairfax Food Council received applications from Aldrin ES, Canterbury Woods ES, Wakefield Forest ES, Graham Road ES, and West Potomac HS. Thanks to grant funds from the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth, the Food Council can afford to include **all five schools** in this program! Each participating school will receive:

- 3 dual-chamber composting tumblers (each tumbler totals 55.5 gallons)
- 25 lidded buckets for food scrap collection
- 5 large leaf bags
- 1 \$75 Home Depot gift card
- Educational resources provided by Compost Crew and FCPS Get 2 Green

Participating schools will use these tools and resources to create hands-on experiences and educate students about food waste, composting, edible gardening, and healthy eating.

Careit App Announcement:

Diane Charles, FFC Project Manager & Bill Threkald, Cornerstones

Diane and Bill shared some information about the Careit app. Careit is a food donation and rescue software that makes it easy for businesses and institutions to donate surplus food and goods directly to local nonprofits. The Capitol area has quite a few food rescue organizations that are already committed to providing similar services, but this is another option. Use this link to learn more: <https://careit.com/>

FFC Food Access & Literacy Work Group Members' Announcements

- **Elisa**—The schools participating in the composting pilot program may need assistance in assembling their composting tumblers. If you are interested in helping, should that need arise, please email Elisa (elisa.solomon@fairfaxcounty.gov). If you have a preference for which school you would like to volunteer at, please indicate that in your email.
- **Eva**—Food Rescue US is always accepting food donations. If you have safe food, let them know, and they will pick it up and deliver it to places that need it.
- **Bill**—Cornerstones' Food Hub is a facility/network to address food insecurity and food waste by providing food to organizations that distribute food. They are working to rescue food and create a place with adequate storage for cold and shelf-stable racks. Currently, their partners can view their inventory in a PDF that is emailed weekly, but the goal is for their partners to see their inventory in a system/layout that is similar to Shopify's. Organizations can place orders, and the Food Hub makes some deliveries. However, their delivery service is not sustainable as most of their drivers are focused on capturing food and not delivering. In terms of locations serviced, Food Hub aims to supplement food assistance work in the larger Dulles area, Reston, Herndon, Sterling, and Ashburn. The Food Hub is still in a start-up mode, but hopes to expand by building a pipeline of suppliers to guarantee food for those outside of these areas.
- **Harmonie**—WFCM received a grant from CAFB that allowed them to implement Smart Choice for online food orders. Plus, WFCM is working with the CAFB Door Dash pilot. They are hoping others will jump on next FY for the online orders and of course hoping that the Door Dash partnership continues/expands.

[Next Food Access & Literacy Work Group Meeting:](#) March 27, 2024 at 10:30 a.m.