



## Food Access & Literacy Work Group Meeting Notes

Fairfax Food Council

April 24, 2024, 10:30 am – 11:30 am

### Smart Choice and Doordash Program Update

#### Pamela Montesinos, Director of Client Operations and Programs, Western Fairfax Christian Ministries

WFCM has an 18-month grant to allow their clients to place food pantry orders online via Smart Choice and have those orders delivered via DoorDash.

Pamela shared a video demonstrating how clients can place orders on the Smart Choice website. The site has offerings organized into the following categories:

- Food
  - Further organized by food group
- Soups (e.g., canned soup, ramen)
- Beverages
- Personal Hygiene (e.g., lotion, deodorant)
- Baby Items (e.g., formula, diapers)

There are “per family” and “per individual” quantity limits on certain items.

**Example:**

Only one bag of dry beans can be selected per family, while a maximum of four cans of fruit can be selected per four-person family.

The site also features non-food items, which also have quantity limits.

**Example:**

If you don't have a baby, you won't see the baby formula and diapers options.

Clients can also add specifications to selections.

**Example:**

Clients specify “only fat-free milk” when they select milk.

Smart Choice automatically assigns “vegan” and “vegetarian” tags to food items. However, if WFCM offers a food item that is not already in the Smart Choice system, the item and applicable tags can be added manually. Upon checkout, clients enter the delivery date, time, and address and DoorDash makes the delivery. All deliveries are made within a 10 mile radius of WFCM. This radius cover up to 30 clients (mostly older adults) within 9 zip codes. DoorDash has restrictions to limit each bag/box to 25 lbs or less. There is also a \$6 fee (which WFCM covers) for large orders up to 50 lbs per bag/box. This option is great for holiday boxes that have heavy turkeys in them. Usually, WFCM adds two bags/boxes to the number of people in a family. For example, a family of three gets five bags/boxes. After a delivery is sent, Pamela calls clients to schedule thier next shopping appointment. Clients are allowed to shop once a month.

This is a web-based program, not an app. Pamela is responsible for creating shopping IDs and passwords. In-person shopping is still available. Some clients still prefer in-person shopping to using DoorDash. Using this technology can be challenging for older adults, so patience is required. Sometimes Pamela helps to remind clients to place their orders. Other times, Pamela helps to remind clients of how to place orders. Some clients do not have access to wifi at home, so they place orders from their local library. Pamela also helps by placing orders for clients over the phone. These calls generally take 10 minutes.

To participate in these services, individuals must be clients of WFCM. WFCM has its own process for adding new clients which includes a certification process and address verification. This grant ends in June 2024.

## Presentation of Community Health Assessment Data

### Sarah White, Strategic Partnerships Manager, Fairfax County Health Department

Sarah presented the data collected during the Health Department’s recent Community Health Assessment. A lot of data was covered, but here are some key statistics.

- Adults who have **not completed high school** are over **2 times** as likely to be unemployed and nearly **6 times** more likely to live in poverty compared to those with a college degree.
- Nearly **half (46%)** of Fairfax residents spend more than 30% of their income on housing.
  - Nearly **1 in 5 (19%)** of households live above the federal poverty line but still struggle to meet basic needs due to the high cost of living and limited financial resources.
- Nearly **half (48%)** of food-insecure residents can’t get help from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) because their households make too much money to qualify.

- The leading cause of premature deaths from 2019 to 2021 by **age group** are:
  - Teens (ages 13-17): Suicide
  - Adults (ages 18-49): Drug Overdose
  - Older Adults (ages 50-74): Chronic Disease (cancer, heart disease, etc.)
- Those who don't have a college degree are **4 times** as likely to be uninsured compared to those who do.
- The 7 Corners/Bailey's Crossroads area and the Hybla Valley area are consistently in the highest need categories.

Work Group members shared that they would like to see the social determinants of health (SDOH) addressed because they expect a trickle-down effect that will positively influence the other health problems individuals are facing.

SDOH, access to healthcare, substance use, and mental health are trending as top priorities at community data walks, thus far. Additionally, a key theme already emerging from those data walks is that housing is too expensive and is dominating the household's budget. If households spend the bulk of their monthly income on housing costs, money for food, healthcare, school, etc., will be stretched thin.

See the attached presentation to review more data!

### **FFC Food Access & Literacy Work Group Members' Announcements**

- Chris Garris from Britepaths announced that the 2024 farmers market flyer is now available in Spanish and English. There is also a multilingual FCPA SNAP flyer. The 2024 Farmers Market Schedule is available too.
- Gillian Kimura from Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB) announced that CAFB is offering Produce Guides and 7-Way Cards to familiarize clients with donation items. Their goal is to help people learn how to use or prepare the foods they are offered/given. CAFB strives to offer culturally appropriate foods, but such offerings aren't guaranteed since the food bank relies on donations. These resources are downloadable for free. Visit CAFB's nutrition education page. They will be continually uploading translated materials as they become available. Right now, the produce guides and 7-way cards are complete in five languages (Arabic, French, Vietnamese, English, and Spanish).

**Next Food Access & Literacy Work Group Meeting: May 29, 2024 at 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.**