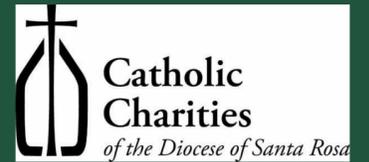




Needs Assessment Evaluation of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Santa Rosa's Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Program

Carley Gill
University of San Francisco



Introduction

Partner Organization: Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Santa Rosa is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit serving people of all faiths across Northern California. The organization has more than 20 different programs of service, including issues related to shelter & housing, immigration, senior services, and health & wellness.

Area of focus: Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention (NEOP) is funded by a state-level grant aimed to give local implementing agencies the ability to deliver nutrition and physical activity workshops to SNAP-eligible (low income) members of the community.

- **SNAP:** The USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, and in California known CalFresh, is a federal aid program that offers nutrition assistance to millions of eligible, low-income individuals and families.
- **SNAP-Ed:** The goal of SNAP-Ed is to improve the likelihood that persons eligible for SNAP will make healthy choices within a limited budget and choose active lifestyles. The USDA partners with local agencies to deliver nutrition education to SNAP recipients.

Goal: The student consultant worked with Catholic Charities to determine an aspect of the NEOP program that needed further development to meet objectives and improve program outcomes.

Evaluation

Determine:

- Where are there barriers to success?
- Why do they exist and how can they be combatted?
- What do other organizations do differently?

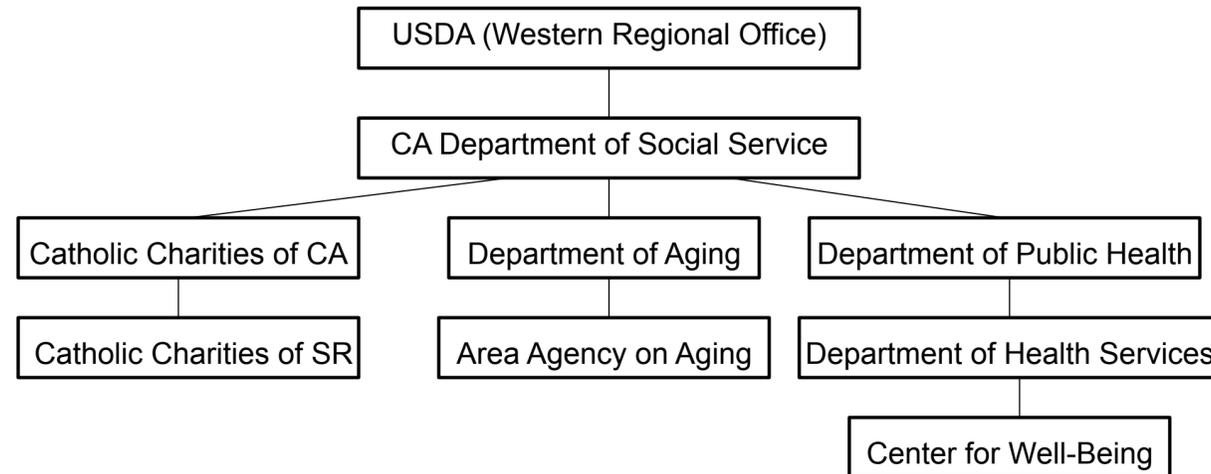
Accomplish:

- Based on the above determinations, create an internal document to streamline communication and improve the process of program implementation within the organization
- Provide recommendations based on comparative analysis of Sonoma County organizations implementing the NEOP program

- Literature review of nutrition and obesity issues in Sonoma County
- Expert interviews with professionals in Sonoma County implementing the NEOP program
- Consultations with Catholic Charities program staff
- Thorough review of Catholic Charities materials
- Attendance of Nutrition Workshops

Analysis and Results

Chain of SNAP-Ed / NEOP Implementing Agencies



Overview of Educational Workshop Implementation by Agency

Catholic Charities of Santa Rosa: The NEOP program has two full-time staff members devoted solely to teaching program workshops. They recently began utilizing interns from the local junior college in the Nutrition and Dietetics program, but the bulk of the work primarily falls on staff.

The Center for Well-Being: This organization was awarded a subcontract with the Department of Health Services based on a successful program already in place that aligned with SNAP-Ed goals. The Promotores de Salud are voluntary health promoters in Sonoma County. A position as an intern with the program is highly sought after by students earning degrees in nutrition and health at local colleges.

Area Agency on Aging: The Area Agency on Aging has approximately 20 volunteer coaches teaching Matter of Balance, which is a partially SNAP-Ed funded program. AAA has one part-time Program Coordinator devoted solely to this program, who recruits and trains coaches to teach workshops relating to strengthening balance, as well as a nutrition component for seniors.

Implementing Agencies	Average # Weekly Workshops	# of Current Volunteer Workshop Facilitators
	3	2
	22	60+
	3	20

A comparison of the three local implementing agencies revealed that the agencies with more volunteers, interns, and staff members teaching nutrition education workshops reach the most SNAP-Ed eligible members of the community.

While the NEOP program at Catholic Charities is less than a year old, and still needs to continue gaining traction and presence in the Santa Rosa community, one area to focus on is internships.

In discussion of possible strategies and improvement plans, Catholic Charities requested a way to streamline internal communication. The organization and student consultant agreed that creating material to develop the onboarding of interns and providing them with focused guidelines would be the best place to start. The student consultant created the *Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention (NEOP) Intern Handbook*. This document acts as a stand-alone piece that can be given to interns in conjunction with the general Catholic Charities Volunteer Handbook.

The *Intern Handbook* contain the following:

- ❖ **About Catholic Charities** – a general overview of the organization, its mission, vision, and values
- ❖ **Nutrition and Obesity Issues in Sonoma County** – the major health problems that the Sonoma County community faces
- ❖ **About NEOP** – an overview of the program and its goals/objectives
- ❖ **Intern Responsibilities** – what can be expected of the intern, their role and responsibilities
- ❖ **Workshop Guidelines** – how to deliver workshops, workshop topics, who the audience is
- ❖ **Intern Resources** – healthy recipes, tips on public speaking, engaging and audience

Recommendations

The student consultant has recommended to Catholic Charities that this document act as a stand-alone guide to be given to incoming interns in conjunction with the Volunteer Handbook. Similar guides can be created for every program that utilizes interns. Alternatively, the organization can choose to merge these guides with the Volunteer Handbook so that each program has its own section. In addition, external communication should be streamlined – a website update, a program overview (“pitch deck”) for potential workshop sites, and a job description for intern recruitment.

Center for Community Health and Evaluation. (2011). *South Santa Rosa HEAL-CHI Collaborative Summary Report*. Seattle, WA.

Measure of America. (2014). *A portrait of Sonoma County: Sonoma County human development report 2014*. Burd-Sharps, S., Lewis, K.

Northern California Center for Well-Being. (2016, March 1). Advocacy. Retrieved from <http://www.norcalwellbeing.org/advocacy.php>

Nutrition Education and Obesity Program. (2013). *Grant Agreement number 13-20506*. Retrieved from <http://www.sonoma-county.org/health/publications/pdf/snaped.pdf>

Trust for America's Health. (2015). *The State of Obesity: Better Policies for a Healthier America*. Levi, J., Segal, L.M., Rayburn, J., Martin, A.