



Replacing Food Scarcity with Food Security

FRFB Health Equity Monthly

Serving with Intention

BY LATOYA BROWN

Exciting things are happening here at Fredericksburg Regional Food Bank! We officially began the implementation of our statewide Health Equity Plan in April of 2022! Together, we're working with the Federation of Virginia Food Banks, to accomplish two key goals, right away:

1. Develop and implement a Healthy Pantry Model that will help our pantries work towards better meeting the health and nutrition needs of the people we serve.
2. Create a Health Equity Community Assessment to help us address inequities in nutritious food access in our service areas.

We have already selected a few pantries to "pilot" the Healthy Pantry Model and will be assessing our entire network of partner agencies for readiness to implement the model at their sites. The assessment will help each pantry examine where they are and set goals for incorporating healthier food options and ways of operating as suggested in the model. We will work across our network to care for and improve the health of our neighbors facing food insecurity while addressing the root causes of hunger. We are committed to the equitable, intentional provision of quality, nutritious food for all people we serve.

For more information, contact LaToya Brown via email at labrown@fredfood.org



Collective Action to Prevent Diabetes

Diabetes is on the rise in our service area. According to the US News Healthiest communities data report, the prevalence of diabetes is above the median national average at 10.9%. The obesity rate is 34.4%. People diagnosed with obesity are at high risk for developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. The YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) is an evidence-based program that helps overweight adults at risk for type 2 diabetes adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles by eating healthier, increasing physical activity, and losing a modest amount of weight. Last quarter, the Fredericksburg Regional Food Bank (FRFB) held a partnership meeting with the YMCA. Jillian Holmes, the Association Wellness and Community Health Director at the YMCA, was concerned that her students

wouldn't be able to afford consuming a healthier diet. FRFB agreed to pilot an effort to support the YMCA's DPP Program which is currently being held at the Lloyd Moss Free Clinic. The FRFB created a menu that contains the recommended food items referenced in the CDC's Prevent T2 Curriculum. Participants have access to the menu through the Order Ahead Program and FRFB delivers their orders to them at their scheduled DPP course twice per month. The groceries complete the focus on better nutrition, while removing barriers to nutritious food. Participants will work together to achieve the following goals:

- Reduction in individual body weight by 7%
- Increase in physical activity to 150min/wk

Dietary intake is closely linked to health outcomes, the foods sourced and distributed through this partnership will be health promotive. Food insecurity is a solvable determinant of health that can be tackled by partnerships and programs like this which couple nutrition education with access to food that support a decrease in negative health outcomes.



Committed to the Health of Our Neighbors

The Fredericksburg Regional Food Bank's Health Equity Work Group (FRFB HEWG), along with key nutrition professionals from our community, are working together to develop a Nutrition Policy. The purpose of this policy is to guide decisions around sourcing and food distribution. In addition, it will serve as an official statement of our commitment to our neighbors, partner agencies, community partners, donors, stakeholders and the community-at-large to provide food that protects and supports individual and community health.

The completed nutrition policy will cover the three main sources of foods and beverage in our inventory including:

- directly purchased by the food bank
- obtained through government commodity programs
- all fresh produce
- case lotted donations

As a member of the Federation of Virginia Food Banks, this policy also aligns with other food banks in the state and our collective vision of promoting Health Equity by prioritizing access to nutritious and culturally diverse food.