

Active Projects

- **Feeding Texas - Client Empowerment Corps**
 - The Client Empowerment Corps is an innovative program, comprised of 21 AmeriCorps VISTA Members focused on alleviating the upstream, economic causes of hunger as well as the downstream effects of hunger on health. Client Empowerment Corps Members increase client access to new services by building partnerships with community organizations to improve clients' health or increase access to economic and financial resources. Additionally, all of our VISTA strategically incorporate the voices of hungry Texans into the public conversation on hunger through a statewide storybanking initiative.
 - Our VISTAs are placed at 12 different food banks throughout the state of Texas and seek to form partnerships with other nonprofits, sustainability services, health organizations, colleges and universities within their community to improve the lives of food bank clients.
 - Austin - CTFB and Feeding Texas Office
 - El Paso - El Pasoans Fighting Hunger Food Bank
 - Houston - Houston Food Bank
 - Dallas - North Texas Food Bank
 - Lubbock - South Plains Food Bank

Best Practices

Purpose:

- Evaluating best practices and creating a pilot project that will aid the Bastrop Hunger Free Community Coalition in amplifying community voices. After experiencing the inspirational Client Empowerment Group share their hardships with hunger at the New Braunfels Food Bank, I recognized the importance of civic leadership and individual agency along with collective action in underserved communities. My goal is to create a replicable process that ensures the voice and experience of those impacted by hunger can be incorporated into hunger solutions in Bastrop County. I will present the plan to the Bastrop Hunger Free Community Coalition this upcoming January then implement it in Spring 2018 and will also make it an easily accessible resource for all Hunger Free Communities
- 3 Main Goals
 - 1) To help those who are often unheard gain a voice, enabling them to record and reflect on their experiences and their communities' conditions, both positive and negative.
 - 2) To encourage critical consciousness. Through choosing, discussing, and reflecting on the subjects of their photographs, the photographers can come to a clearer understanding of their circumstances and the economic, social, psychological, and political forces that shape them.
 - 3) To bring about change that will improve conditions and enhance lives by reaching and influencing policy makers
- Key components
 - Critical consciousness
 - Popular social concept that focuses on achieving an in-depth understanding of the world by illuminating oppressive elements of life
 - Culture of silence (i.e., "Conspiracy of Silence")

- Consists of a large group of colleagues or national groups that refrain from speaking on certain topics due to fear of political repercussion
 - “Analyzing the forces shaping their circumstances is a first step toward bringing about change.”
- Define your terms
 - Food bank
 - Food pantry
 - Community assessment
 - Stakeholders
 - Coalition
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- 1. PhotoVoice Project//Snapshots of Hunger
 - Implementing photovoice into your community
 - Definition: “Photovoice is a type of participatory action research in which people – usually those with little power – use photographs and/or video to picture their environment and experiences and to express their thoughts about them.”
 - Defining Terms
 - Goals:
 - Provide a visual microphone to amplify voices of those who are muted by society
 - Instill critical consciousness
 - Influence policy and program improvements
 - Resource: <http://hungerthroughmylens.org/resources/photovoice-kit/>
 - Implementation: <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/photovoice/main>
 - Existing examples:
 - “Snapshots of Hunger” in Lubbock (Spring 2014)
 - Successful
 - Cameras leftover!
- 2. Story Bank
 - Story-Banking Toolkit: <http://familiesusa.org/story-bank-toolkit>
- 3. Client Empowerment Groups/Panels
 - Implementing story-banking in your community
 - Create → Build → Collect → Develop → Disseminate
 - Definition: This method involves
 - Why?
 - Goals:
 - Resources

- https://youtu.be/ov_CNrV6XKA

Resources:

- Below is a CPPP video about families utilizing assistance programs in Texas. It is very well done and informative. I see this video as an inspiration for our goal to capture voices in communities experiencing hardships and how they navigate different assistance programs.
 - Link: <https://youtu.be/CLnD1u05G4A>
- Witnesses to Hunger – <http://www.centerforhungerfreecommunities.org/our-projects/witnesses-hunger>
- Community Toolbox – <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/search/node/voices%20of%20people%20in%20need?page=1>
- Photovoice Project Information: <https://photovoice.org/>
- THI Photovoice Tool Kit by Devin Burton (PDF, Spring 2014)
- What can this be used for?
 - Applying for grants
 - Community involvement
- Questions about hunger (adapted from Big Hunger by Andrew Fisher):
 - https://gallery.mailchimp.com/3238362c19729a24346d4a774/files/4f8bd814-6498-44b7-8344-ffd4ee29602c/Fisher_book_club_guide.pdf
- Disclaimer: This project is intended as a framework to enhance existing community engagement efforts and/or initiate a more in-depth approach to shedding light on lived experiences. In no way am I or THI assuming that any of the organizations in our cohort are not engaging/involving the community!
 - Other concerns:
 - How involved will THI be in this project?
 - Offer framework and guidance throughout the process
 - Take on as a project within the cohort and have an action group
 - Establish action groups
 - Backpack program
 - Increasing summer meal site
 - Community voices
 - Fundraising
 - Logo
 - Funding/Budgeting?
 - What should I base funding off of?

- General prices
 - Present research findings
 - Potential costs
 - Incentives (gas card, gift card)
 - *Ask Grace about funding
 - Fundraising potential in Bastrop
 - Applying for grants?
 - How can this process help?
 - Ask everyone. Leave no stone unturned.
 - Pro-bono photographer
 - View community members as assets and contributors; Sees community members as experts
 - Personal insight
 - Consent forms
 - Tresha/Kelly
 - Display at the court house?
 - Photomapping
 - Ask the community what they need
 - We want the coalition to establish the narrative
 - Include examples of photovoice
 - Contact Angela
 - Timeline details
 - Story-banking
 - Provide more detailed timeline
- Webinar links
 - Voices: <https://fairfoodnetwork.org/from-the-field/voices-of-double-up-in-america/>
 - HFFI Impact Stories: <http://thefoodtrust.org/what-we-do/administrative/hffi-impacts>
 - About the Healthy Food Financing Initiative: <http://www.healthyfoodaccess.org/resources/library/healthy-food-financing-initiative-hffi>
 - The Center for Healthy Food Access: <http://thefoodtrust.org/centerforhealthyfoodaccess>
 - “My HFFI Story” by PolicyLink: <https://equityis.exposure.co/my-hffi-story>
 - FRAC SNAP Facts: <http://frac.org/programs/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>
 - Snap map by county: <http://frac.org/research/resource-library/snap-map-snap-matters-every-community>
 - Fact Sheet to Protect and Strengthen SNAP: <http://frac.org/action/snap-farm-bill>
 - Double Up Food Bucks Stories: <https://fairfoodnetwork.org/projects/double-up-food-bucks/>

- Voices of Double Up in America:
 - <https://fairfoodnetwork.org/from-the-field/voices-of-double-up-in-america/>
- Building Healthy Communities:
 - <https://handouts-live.s3.amazonaws.com/5d1eb4385dff41749983e166863afc52?sessionId=4012112820171068952&participantId=400210>
- Stay informed about 2018 Farm Bill:
 - <http://healthyfoodaccess.org/take-action-now/farm-bill-101>
- Local Farms Act:
 - <http://sustainableagriculture.net/our-work/campaigns/fbcampaign/localregional-food/local-farms-act/>
- Healthy Food Access Portal:
 - <http://healthyfoodaccess.org/take-action-now/join-policy-network>

Other Links:

- StoryCorps: <https://storycorps.org/>
- Building Community Through Art:
 - <https://www.fastcompany.com/3059499/these-toolkits-for-artists-teach-how-to-build-community-through-art>
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My approach

- Look at this through a new lens
- Utilize existing tool kits and concepts to create one that works for our specific coalition
- This is a proposal
- Demystify the nuances of underserved populations

Overview

- Why: Bastrop coalition expressed concerns for incorporating voices of their community into
- Clarify Intention: This project is intended as a framework to enhance existing community engagement efforts and/or initiate a more in-depth approach to shedding light on lived experiences. In no way am I or THI assuming that any of the organizations in our cohort are not engaging/involving the community!
- Goal: Gauging interest
- Project descriptions
 - Photovoice (short-term)
 - Story Bank (long-term)
 - Client Empowerment Group (mid-range)
- The role of THI
 - Support and guidance
- Project Timeline
- Budget Breakdown
 - Waiting to hear back from Grace on this topic.
- Evaluation and Implementation plan

- Evaluation: Community assessment of needs
- Implementation:
 - Identify a member who would want to lead this project
 - Form an action group and nominate a leader
 - Evaluate the needs of your community
 - Implement the best option
 - Establish timeline and budget needs.
- Partnerships and Collaborations
- Staff and Team Members
- Conclusions and Reflections

Assessing Community Needs Webinar 20180130

“Community-building Life Cycle”

- Step 1: Community Needs Assessment (Shannon Stover; Jackie Tabone VISTA)
 - Reach out to VISTA community regarding this topic
 - Where do we begin?
 - Direct input from the people that are impacted
 - Look at the “Community Building Lifecycle”
 - Help gain a sense of how to sequence activities
 - 5-step model
 - Articulate needs using facts and data
 - Assessment: Utilize services that already exist
 - Develop curriculum
 - Awareness: Identify service gaps and identify what your org is capable of doing
 - Advisory groups: planning/imp efforts are aligned with community needs
 - Planning:
 - Imp: Do not get stuck!
 - Eval
 - BUILD PARTNERSHIPS
 - What other orgs and stakeholders have to offer
 - Share info w/advisory group and get them to help with outreach
 - Be transparent about what we learn
 - Gao in services?
 - Does the group want what the org has to offer?
 - WHAT DOES COMMUNITY MEAN TO ME
 - Gathering data about the community
 - Gaining a broad perspective
 - gaining a sense of community needs
 - what opps are available
 - what threats exist

- MAKE SURE TO HEAR FROM ALL STAKEHOLDERS (parents, teachers,)
 - Build rapport with the community
 - Community entry - building relationships, partners
- GOAL OF THE ASSESSMENT?
 - Determine if there is a problem with access
 - If so, what are the barriers getting in the way of that access
 - Define “ACCESS” with supervisor
 - Make sure everyone is operating around the same definition
 - Where did the idea for the [program] come from?
- Community Assessment Process
 - **1. Define the scope**
 - Frame the problem
 - “Access...”
 - Define “access”
 - Identify questions to be answered
 - Goal
 - Asking what is already being done to address problems/behaviors
 - Do not compete with community for the same resources
 - Identify the COMMUNITY
 - Geographic scope: where are the majority of people coming from?
 - Identify beneficiaries
 - How do we define “[hunger]” and beneficiaries
 - Get more info about whether or not we need to include a broad spectrum of beneficiaries
 - Identify other stakeholders
 - Everyone who was an impact on the project
 - Rep a variety of diff comm members invested in the project (i.e., coalitions, schools, youth-serving agencies) - ppl who have access to the voices we are trying to work with
 - None of us are working in a cylo
 - **Identify goals and define your scope**
 - **2. Gather data**
 - Federal statistics
 - Track overall trends and existing problems
 - Do not always help explain WHY they exist
 - Community level indicators
 - Insight to the problem

- Contact local entities regarding the specific population you are trying to serve
- Community member experiences
 - MOST IMPORTANT
 - Helps put fed stats and comm ind into context to understand the WHY of the problem
 - Ask what they need and what would help most
- Federal Stats
 - USA.gov US Census Data and Statistics
 - Headwaterseconomics.org Populations at Risk
- Community Level Indicators
 - Look at existing programs (count as indicators)
 - Where am i going to find this data
 - Fed stats are gift-wrapped
 - Local library can help
 - Asking partners if we can share data (restrictions on behalf of funders exist)
- Community experiences
 - Using tools like survey, focus groups, interviews, observation to get an idea of what services they need
 - Get insight to interpret data
 - They understand the complexity of ppl experiencing poverty/hunger in the community
 - Understand the intersectionalities and what factors are driving them
 - Ask coalition what THEY need
 - Be neutral in my approach and listen
 - Use this tool: <http://ctb.ku.edu/en>
 - Review resources, make a plan, ask action group
 - Fail fast and fail often
- **3. Organize Key Findings**
 - Summarize and tease out most salient points
 - Identify categories to sort info
 - Clarify the problem(s)
 - Define terms
 - Refine understanding of target group
 - Use data to demonstrate needs of populations
 - Compare data to community/federal stats
 - Include community narrative to identify complexities related to quantitative data
 - Summarize existing services and resources
 - “The strengths” found thru asset-mapping
 - E.g., libs that have access to free technology

- Paint comprehensive picture of existing programs
 - Where is the energy for this
 - Identify gaps
 - Better understand barriers for target population
 - Hear directly from target population
 - Comm mem will tell exactly which gaps are impacting them the most
 - The process isn't always linear
- **4. Set Priorities**
 - Ask essential questions:
 - What is our vision for the future?
 - What does "increased access" look like and the community you are trying to empower
 - What is being done to support that vision?
 - What gaps exist
 - Feedback from stakeholders
 - What opp exist
 - Turn that gap into an opp
 - Reframe "gap" as an "opp"
 - Based on our mission, resources, and skills, which of the opportunities and gaps can we exist
 - Can reveal deeper and darker aspect
 - We are all working on our small pieces of the puzzle
 - Be honest with which pieces you CAN address
 - E.g., How does equity come into play?
 - **5. Communicate Next Steps**
 - "Demystifying Stakeholder Engagement" webinar
 - <https://www.vistacampus.gov/resources/demystifying-stakeholder-engagement>
 - Slides:
 - <https://www.vistacampus.gov/sites/default/files/Community%20Assessment%20slides.pdf>
 - Make an agenda with a timeline to clarify the understanding
 - Presenter
 - Shannon Stober
 - <https://www.theverveexchange.com/>

BASTROP

- One-Pager
 - Define community assessment