

Alaska Food Coalition
March 19, 2010
2:30 pm – 3:05 pm

Participants:

Vanessa Salinas, Alaska Food Coalition
Venietia Santana, State of Alaska HHS, DPA Public Program Work Services
Becky Monsma, Presbyterian Hospitality House
Heather Harris, Alaska Youth and Parent Foundation, AFC President
Michael Curran, State of Alaska Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives
Susannah Morgan, Food Bank of Alaska
Mike Rochin, New Hope on the Last Frontier
Gus Marks, Juneau Youth Services
Linda Bond, Catholic Social Services Saint Francis House

Welcome: Heather Harris, AFC President

Quick Member Update

Michael Curran is with the State of Alaska Department of HHS, Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives. He is the only staff member. Their mission is to work with faith based organizations focusing on improving the well being of Alaskans by fostering partnerships. Gov. Palin created the initiative in 2005. Michael coordinates 17 grantees. Grantees recently received continuation letters for the FY2011 grants. The grants are competitive, it's a legislative appropriation. Grantees are located in remote and small communities. The grants provide for essential human services for domestic violence, suicide, child sexual assault, etc. Michael is also working with a homeless coalition in Juneau and is developing a program for at risk youth called Socrates Café: At www.hss.state.ak.us/fbci you will find a link to national websites for updates on grant and award opportunities. Michael also gets updates from Grantstation; if you would like to be on his update email list contact Michael at: Michael.curran1@alaska.gov

Guest Speaker

Venietia Santana, State of Alaska HHS – The Food Stamp Program in Alaska

Food Stamps are a supplemental program to help people meet their needs. The Food Stamp Program works with a variety of partners doing outreach. This is one of the few programs where they want to increase numbers. In February, there were 29,571 food stamp cases; a single case can have more than one person. 80% of food stamp cases (February) were in urban areas.

How can we help with outreach to rural areas? Access to items for purchase in rural areas is tough, expensive, outdated – available foods that are the least expensive are

usually high in sugar and fat. No fresh fruits and vegetables. Subsistence helps, but a big need for food resources exists in rural communities.

Question: Is there anyway to find out what the percentage of food stamp participation is within a specific rural area? Venietia: Her department has the capability to delineate by community, such as Hooper Bay, which has 1500 residents with 900 participating in the Food Stamp Program. HHS can access this information by community. Vanessa will forward a copy of AFC communities to Venietia, and share with AFC members.

Michael: In Nov 2009 the Anchorage Daily News published an article about food stamp usage in Alaska, example: 62% of residents of the Wade Hampton Census District participate in the Food Stamp Program. "The federal food stamp program feeds nearly half the people in the Wade Hampton Census area of Western Alaska -- one of the highest rates in the country, according to a New York Times analysis."

Read more: <http://community.adn.com/node/145703#ixzz0ifTwIp4J>

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Venietia: Rural Alaska is consistently the area in need of advocacy and education.

Linda: The Food Stamp Outreach Coordinator Kokayi Nosakhere visits Saint Francis every week conducting Food Stamp Outreach in the waiting room. He is very well received. Clients at Saint Francis are often from outside Anchorage, they could be utilized as ambassadors with folks from their home communities to help educate about the Food Stamp Program. Access to food in some of these communities could still be a problem, some communities do not have a place you can use the Quest Card. Kokayi also shares information about senior assistance, TANF and energy programs when conducting Food Stamp Outreach.

Vanessa mentioned the Food Stamp outreach program will move from Food Bank of Alaska to Alaska Food Coalition starting in FY211, July 1. Vanessa, Robin and Kokayi are already working together to make this a smooth transfer. Kokayi will be conducting Food Stamp Outreach in communities outside Anchorage and Mat-Su in the future.

AFC Workgroups

The Senior Workgroup had its first teleconference on March 8. Eight AFC member groups participated. They talked about utilizing nutrition, cooking and budgeting resources of UAF Cooperative Extension program, identifying ways to eliminate duplication of services in communities, and accessing funding. The next call is scheduled on April 12.

The Rural Workgroup had its first teleconference on Marcy 10. Eight AFC member groups participated. They recommended hosting a teleconference for AFC mini-grant applicants to review the grant criteria. This could help increase the number of rural grantees. Vanessa will continue with outreach to AFC rural members for input. The next call is scheduled on April 14.

Treasurers Report, Susannah Morgan

Approval of 2011 Budget: Vote: Anyone not in Favor: None

Yea: Unanimous

FY2011 Budget Approved

Next Call: Thursday, April 15.