

Notes from Wholesome Wave/DVCP Training Meeting at St. Mary's in Lewiston  
*Notes taken by Carolyn Snell*  
3/20/13

Ned Porter started the meeting by talking about how Wholesome Wave (WW) is funding 2 pilot projects with a general goal of increasing access to locally grown fresh fruits and veg "making beneficial behavioral change" in an urban and a rural setting.

One of the tools in WW's toolbox is the Double Value Coupon Program, and also matching that with other SNAP Ed programs. SNAP Ed had been run through the Cooperative Extension, but is now run through UNE which works through Healthy Maine Partnerships (HMPs)

The meeting happened at St. Mary's Nutrition Center, which does some cooking Ed programs and also supports the Lewiston Farmers' Market. Kirsten from St. Mary's filled us in on their work:

Saint Mary's has been facilitating the acceptance of SNAP at Lewiston Market for a long time through a lot of different transitional technology, figuring out the different systems. Their goal has been to match education with DVCP. They connect with folks in the immigrant/refugee population by hiring peer nutrition educators. They did a 3 class series with 3 layers of incentives to reinforce attendance. They get \$5 in SNAP credit for attending each class and an additional \$5 graduation bonus. To measure the impact of their work they do 3 layers of surveying : an enrollment survey, a pre-class survey, and a post survey. They paid a \$20 cash bonus for the post survey to get responses. Lots of leg work tracking folks down...

The incentives for the class were separate from the DVCP which they started at a 100% match, but are now doing a 50% match to keep the program more sustainable.

The 3 main goals of the education outreach are to increase: access to the market, knowledge of the market, and comfort at market. For St. Mary's and Lewiston, having peer educators who speak the languages of the folks shopping is key. Many of the farmers at Lewiston also speak Somali.

One of the biggest challenges for encouraging folks to use their SNAP benefits at market is still the price barrier, even w/ DVCP, mostly because families are so large. But also some folks are shopping at market but paying with cash. Still don't quite know what the barrier there is...

Program design and growth and evaluation is a chicken and egg problem, which requires slow progress.

Ned Porter: All programs through WW have a strong component of data collection to measure base values and efficacy of programming.

Working toward building repeat customers, especially because one time use is hard to measure, but also not making healthy habits.

At Norway Market: HMP (especially Healthy Oxford Hills) has been working with Headstart and also doing a Cooking Matters class, and even a Cooking Matters class at market, Shopping Matters, and outreach with WIC. Hoping to build in incentives in a measurable way.

Ned: Definitely need to do some data collection at the Market Level, trying to track individual SNAP users to see if folks are returning to market even after dvcp stops, etc. This data collection is for the business piece of the puzzle, as well as for data analysis locally and on a national level, and use within each organization (HMPs, Markets, WW, etc).

Tim Fuller: SNAP Ed is a moving target. Healthy Portland is hiring a Nutrition Educator who will have a certain number of hours assigned to being on site at market during market hours. Hoping to create incentives for folks who complete off-site sessions, and fill out form/surveys upon completion.

Specific classes yet to be determined, maybe cooking demos at market, cooking cart?

Sarah from Skowhegan Market: Can we get SNAP clients involved in getting the word out and signing peers up for classes?

Tim: Social marketing definitely an objective, especially for getting the Farmers' market message out there.

One of the challenges is also managing expectations/realities. So far UNE is looking for 3000 SNAP contacts made at market. So far 720 distinct SNAP users have shopped at Portland market. Potential growth, yes, but will take a lot of time.

Very important to not have a separate SNAP line at market. Keep it dignified and upbeat.

Skowhegan (I think) uses market fees to cover half of the cost of running the SNAP program.

Maine has 2<sup>nd</sup> highest % of SNAP redeemed at Farmers' Markets and Farmstands! Second only to Hawaii. \$350,000 state wide which includes farmstands

SNAP acceptance/access is scaling up: 2011 11 mkts took EBT, 2012 23 markets, 2013 looking like 40 markets! Numbers as a whole are increasing.

So how do we sustain the capacity? How do we sustain incentives? Should the incentives continue?

SNAP Training Piece:

WW is at about 300 sites nationally and working with 55 program partners (like MFFM). Wholesome Wave emphasizes fruits and veg, but does not require that dvcp \$ is only for fruit and veg. If we were using DVCP to match WIC, we'd have to have a different token for that because WIC is more specific.

Hanne: For our market the reason to do DVCP is because we'd like to build our capacity to accept SNAP, and because accepting SNAP is the right thing to do, but it needs to work at market.

Norway market has 7-10 vendors.

DVCP is a good way to connect farmers to a new customer base (SNAP clients)

WW uses the data it collects to take affect federal policy where it sees the best opportunities to do so. National SNAP budget is \$160 Billion. Trying to connect that money to farmers who grow food, and empowering folks to make good and healthy choices for their families.

Maggie: Specific Market level data collection to share within ww network to help other programs start or improve. This would be specific to how DVCP happens at market, but ww have forms for the data collections. Basically it's collecting customer transactions. #SNAP customers each day, whether they were new customers at market, \$in SNAP \$in dvcp match (doesn't have to be 100% match). Report those for each market day. Tracking new customers is important. Then log in to ww's website to report data.

Make sure that whatever form dvcp takes at market is clear to vendors and customers. Good signage that is familiar and welcoming.

Maybe flags for Healthy Portland?

Back to whole group again:

Different partners in this network bring different things to the table, and make different things possible year to year. Both short term value and long term value. Important to keep long view in mind.

Increasing dues at market to pay staff is a tricky transition to farmers. Need to prove program's value first, to some extent.

As systems develop, what if it's not worth it?

Fundraising possibilities to support SNAP programs: Convenience charges on credit/debit, annual fundraising events, merchandise, support from city or other local businesses.

What do we want this network to be? (discussion of name)

Can be all four: learning network, doing network, policy network, catalytic network. Needs to figure out purpose and mission

Good for learning things that don't work, learning how big a project this kind of work is, and is there enough of a pay off.

Also in general what is the difference between capacity and funding?

Craig Lapine: Every Market needs a business plan. Are all markets set up to make one? What kind of capacity do you need or want?