Food Pantries

Introduction

Food Pantries are often located in small rooms or closets out of which packages of food are provided to individuals in need. They are usually stocked through donations from individuals, partnerships with larger food banks, and produce provided from community gardens. As a result of rampant food insecurity among college students today, more and more schools are starting their own food pantries to support a rising number of low-income students.

Reducing Food Insecurity

- Providing students in need with a food pantry on-campus can help ease their concerns about how to afford/where to get their next meal.

Campus Camaraderie

- Bringing your community together to help alleviate hunger on campus is a great way to unify students, improve school spirit, and enhance their sense of belonging.

Student Experience

- Allow students to gain vital job experience by employing them as food bank volunteers and encourage them to fundraise, manage, advertise, and campaign for the food bank.

Implementation

Some well-renowned ideas for implementing and maintaining an effective food pantry include:

- Establish a committee at your college to oversee the food pantry's founding

- Determine/Evaluate local food banks in your area to partner with

- Ensure that the food pantry space is sanitary, secure, and accessible for students

- Ensure that risk management, legal considerations, and non-profit status is accounted for

- Create a food pantry application and include rules/guidelines for users to abide by

> *"The national poverty rate in 2013 was 14.5%, but for college students who were not living with relatives or on campus, the poverty rate was nearly 52%."*[1]

Best Practices

- Devise marketing strategies through media outlets on and off campus to help promote the food pantry

- Connect classroom work to food pantry involvement (have students in media courses advertise, have students in health courses devise cookbooks with healthy recipes to distribute to those in need, etc.)

- Schools should narrow their initial target population to better ensure short-term sustainability

- Have Financial Aid Offices evaluate data from student and FAFSA applications in determining which students to reach out to (yes, this is legal under FERPA guidelines)

- Food pantries and campus grocery, convenient stores could be eligible for SNAP authorization.

Resources

- CUFBA Campus Toolkit

- Basics in Safe Food Handling

- Student Government Pantry Toolkit

Local Food Banks:

- Second Harvest Food Bank of East Tennessee

- Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee (Also covers West TN)

- Second Harvest Food Bank of Northeast Tennessee

- Mid South Food Bank

TBR Institutions:

- Pellissippi State Community College Food Pantry (Pellissippi Pantry)

- Austin Peay State University Food Pantry (S.O.S. Food Pantry)

- Northeast State Community College (Mobile Food Pantry)

[1] "Running a Campus Food Pantry Student Government Toolkit." (n.d.): n. pag. 2015. Web.