
EMERGENCY FOOD SYSTEM CHALLENGES

LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

To increase institutional cultural competency and mediate language and cultural differences, pantries have tried:

YOUTUBE

Lovin' Spoonfuls, a food rescue agency in Boston, produces subtitled videos of chefs preparing meals with step-by-step directions. They used a professional translation service to create the videos within their culinary education program called "Plenty".

GOOGLE TRANSLATE

The Idaho Food Bank's website includes a Google Translate tab to translate the site into different languages. Food pantry staff use Google Translate on their phones to communicate with clients in real time.

INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

A study conducted by Bill Emerson Hunger Fellow, Christina Martinez, found that communicating via international media could help reach immigrant populations. Latino residents obtained information from Spanish television and radio. Developing an outreach strategy requires community input to understand how to frame messages and use language effectively.

SIGNAGE

In a different study by Emerson Hunger Fellow, Matthew Mellon, according to a participant at a community meeting hosted by a Latino organization regarding access and the Emergency Food System, having signage and posters in multiple languages can make a pantry appear more friendly.

ORGANIZATIONAL DIVERSITY

Alameda County Community Food Bank in Oakland, California employs a multilingual team to educate and enroll individuals in their CalFresh program (SNAP). According to their website, the team speak in multiple languages when they "host events at schools, health clinics, food distributions and more to help families and seniors learn about the program."

RECIPE CARDS

Share Our Strength, an anti-hunger organization, partnered with other national food organizations to translate their Cooking Matters curriculum into Spanish. Their curriculum also included culturally appropriate foods and recipes that would appeal to their clientele.

PROFESSIONAL TRANSLATION SERVICES

The Latino Community Center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania used Global Wordsmiths, a nonprofit organization that specializes in professional translation services and language access, to translate information into Spanish online and through the phone during the pandemic.

ABOUT THE CENTER

The Ralph W. Voorhees Center for Civic Engagement at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy seeks to enhance educational opportunities and facilitate innovative research through community based research and discussion. The Center is a collaborative effort of faculty, staff, and students and community development actors. The Center conducts community based research and facilitates discussions about urban problems and innovative policy and practice solutions. For more information about our research, please visit us at www.rwv.rutgers.edu