



Connecticut Foodshare

Our Community, Our Food Bank

The Importance of Connection: Creating Access to Non-Food Resources

**The Institute for Hunger Research & Solutions
September 2023**

Welcome!



Please mute your audio as you enter the meeting.



Raise your hand before unmuting your audio and sharing with the group.



Type your questions in the **Q&A**.



Closed captioning and language translation is available.

Objectives

- Understand the meaning and importance of connection to non-food resources in food assistance programs.
- Learn various methods of connecting guests to non-food resources.
- Learn how to get connected to community resources.



Food insecurity is linked to:



Why is connection to non-food resources important?

Examples of community resources that will create a holistic environment for food assistance programs:

Social Services

- Coaching and case management
- Social work
- Active referral services
- Connection to SNAP and/or WIC
- Housing and utility services



Health Care

- Connection to insurance
- Mobile health services
- Mental health counseling/support
- Substance use counseling/support



Youth & Family Services

- Childcare
- Parenting groups
- Youth summer meal programs
- Afterschool programs



Classes & Workshops

- Cooking/nutrition
- Job skills
- GED
- Finance
- Computer training



It takes more than food to end hunger

Not enough food



Collect and distribute more food

- Stagnant wages
- Underemployment
- Lack of access to healthy food
- Unaffordable health insurance
- Lack of affordable housing, childcare
- Systemic inequities



**Holistic,
person-centered,
coordinated
approaches**

Ways to connect



Wrap-around services

Client-centered services offered on-site at the food assistance program to meet guests where they are.

Examples:

- Case management
- Mental health &/or addiction counseling
- Housing counseling
- Job coaching



Active referrals

A staff/volunteer at the food assistance program directly connects a guest to another organization to receive additional services. The staff/ volunteer also follows up with the client to see if the referral was successful.

Examples:

- Worker calls the other organization with the client and makes the appointment
- Worker introduces client to a representative of another organization.



Passive referrals

The food assistance program has information available about additional services offered in the community.

Examples:

- Staff or volunteer provides a list of resources and guest must call on their own.
- TV or bulletin board displays information on other resources.



POLL: Where is your organization when it comes to connection?

- **Passive Referrals:** We provide information about additional services offered in the community through bulletin boards, TVs, fliers, etc.
- **Active Referrals:** We directly connect guests to another organization to receive additional services. We even follow up with the guest to see if the referral was successful.
- **Wrap-around services:** We offer services on-site to meet guests where they are such as case management, coaching, or mental health counseling.
- **We don't offer resources yet, but we are excited to get started!**

Caring for Bethlehem



The Importance of Connection:
Accessing Non-Food Resources

Rick Wood, volunteer
Friends@CFBethlehem.org

Bethlehem, Connecticut

Population: 3,385 (2020)

Grocery Stores: 0

Gas Stations: 0

Town Social Services: 0

Churches: 3 (all provide space to the Bethlehem Food Bank)

Post Office: 1 (Very large for a small town)



from **Our Mission**

Caring for Bethlehem **builds community,**
develops programs to meet local needs, and
makes it possible for volunteers
to match their talents and availability
with opportunities to serve.

Caring for Bethlehem
An All-Volunteer Community Organization Founded in 2017

2017

Bethlehem Food Bank ★

Bethlehem Comfort Closet

2018

School Snacks for Kids

Holiday Meal Programs

Christmas Gifts for Kids ★

Pfahl Children's Fund ★

2019

Helping Hands Fund

Prince of Peace Clothing Bank ★

2020

Bethlehem Assistance Fund ★

Bethlehem Fuel Bank ★

Bethlehem Scholarships ★

Pet Pantry

Toyland ★

2022

CFB Resource Center ★

2023

Adult Scholarship Program

Town Assistance Coordinator★

Lions Club, Schools, Churches, Businesses, & Others

Why non-food resources?

Healthy eating involves so much more than good food.

How can you prepare good food if the house is freezing?

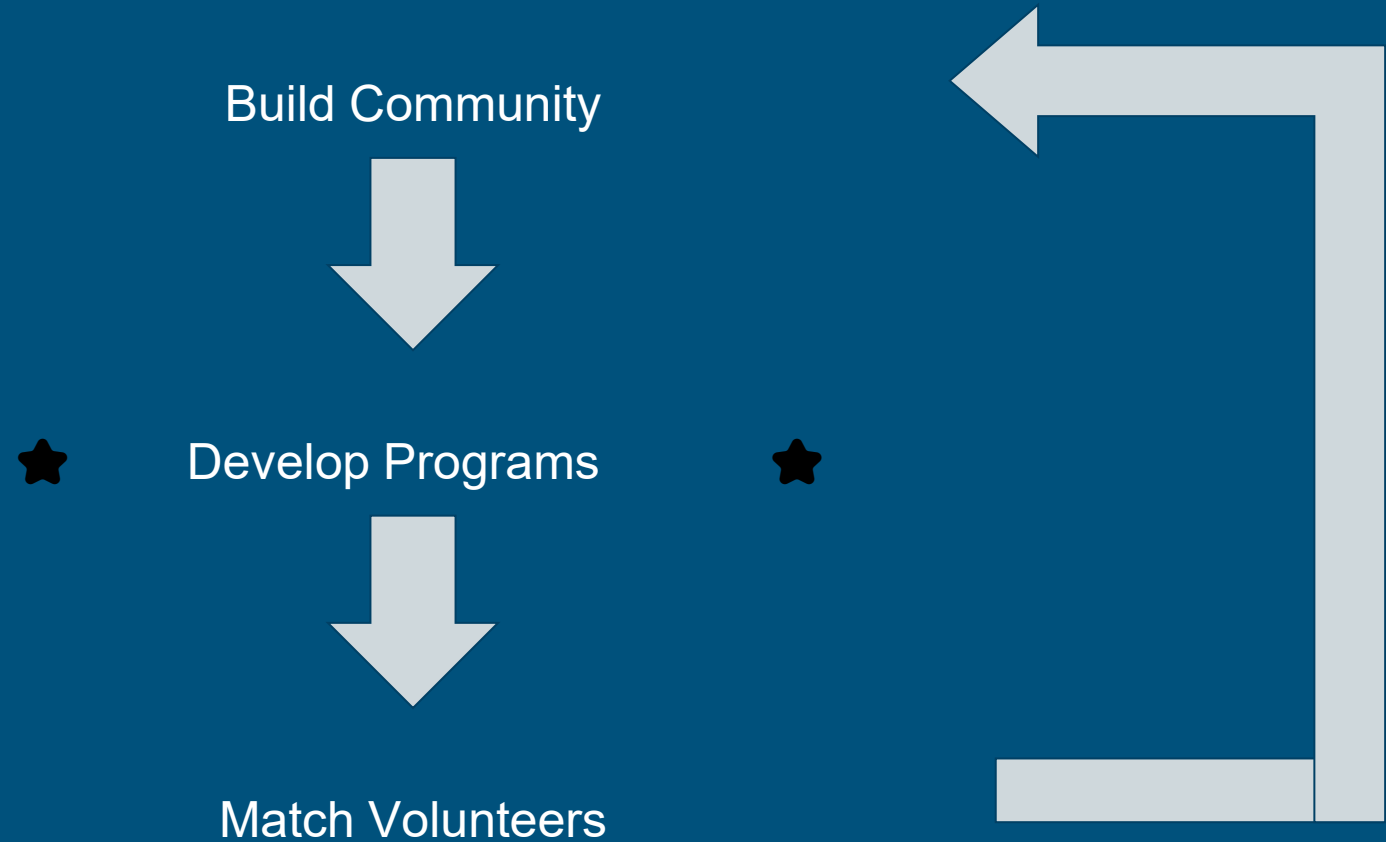
Or the appliances don't work?

Or you are stressing over clothes for the kids?

Or the bills are all overdue?

Hunger is about so much more than food.

Think Big - Start Small



Shiloh Resource Center

346 Butternut Street
Middletown, CT 06457

Pastor: Bishop W. Vance Cotten, Sr.

September 20, 2023



Introduction

- ▶ Shiloh has a history of convening faith-based, civic, municipal, community and clinical partners to address the needs of the community.
- ▶ To further support this work, Shiloh's Resource Center was opened in the Summer of 2022.
- ▶ Through the center, we take a holistic approach to meet the needs of our community and address health disparities.
- ▶ We are connecting residents to community organizations and resources to support their needs. Onsite resources include:
 - Blood Pressure Clinic
 - HUB site for Medicaid members
 - Clothing Closet



Our Partners

Research indicates that a faith-based, self-management approach can improve outcomes for the communities with the highest hypertension rates.



- ▶ American Heart Association
 - ▶ Common priority and interest regarding the health and well-being of all members of the community
- ▶ Middlesex Health
 - ▶ Supports vulnerable people in the community and connects them to additional health resources that they may have had difficulty accessing on their own.
- ▶ This is an important community health initiative for Middletown, 31.6% of the adult population have high blood pressure.
- ▶ This community-based approach aligns with efforts to address gaps in health care access and resources experienced by diverse groups of under-represented Middletown residents.
- ▶ Leaders of this church and membership demonstrate their commitment to improving the lives of all city residents through their outreach and ability to garner support from the region's health systems, civic and community-based organizations.

“The resource center is an important extension of their great work.”



Have Faith in Heart Free Blood Pressure Screening Program



- ▶ Around 121.5 million adults (*about 1 in 2*) in the United States have high blood pressure and nearly half of those people don't have their blood pressure controlled. High blood pressure is a contributing factor to major health conditions including heart attack, heart failure, stroke, kidney failure, and many more.
- ▶ The Blood Pressure Clinic is open every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month from the hours of 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
- ▶ Blood pressure checks are conducted by a Registered Nurse from Middlesex Health.
- ▶ Participants are able to have their blood pressure checked and work with a health care professional from Middlesex Health to learn how to reduce your risks!

You can fight high blood pressure and take an active role by regularly monitoring your blood pressure.

HUB Site for Medicaid Members



The HUSKY Health program will be in your neighborhood to help answer your questions and connect you with community resources.

Learn more about your HUSKY Benefits:

- Member Engagement Services
- Behavioral Health Services
- Dental Services
- Non-Emergency Transportation Services
- 24/7 Nurse Helpline
- Care Management (CM)
- Pharmacy Services
- DSS Benefits Center/ConneCT
- Primary Care Provider

Get Connected to Community Resources:




- Connecticut 2-1-1
- Food Pantries
- Clothing Closets
- Utility Assistance
- Rental Assistance
- Education Services
- Care 4 Kids Services
- Employment Services
- Immigration Services

WHERE

LOCATION

WHEN

DATE & TIME

portal.ct.gov/husky  Like us on Facebook: HUSKYHealthCT  Follow us on Instagram: huskyhealthct  Follow us on Twitter: @HUSKYHealthCT

- ▶ The HUB is open every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
- ▶ Great opportunity to get questions answered about what is available to you as a Medicaid member.
- ▶ On-site Community Health Workers can connect a community member to the community resources needed.
- ▶ Privacy is respected.

Clothing Closet: Graceful Garments



- ▶ Our Mission is to empower and uplift our community through the provision of free clothing.
- ▶ Our purpose is to offer a helping hand to Individuals and families that are facing hardship or life transitions. We are committed to providing a welcoming and respectful environment where community members can shop for essentials at no cost.

Connecting Our Community



**TUESDAY
MAY
23RD
2023**

**3:00PM
TO
7:00PM**

**COMMUNITY
WELLNESS
Day**

**FREE AND OPEN
TO THE
COMMUNITY**

**COVID-19 VACCINES
AND BOOSTERS
FOR AGES 12 & UP
- NO APPOINTMENT
NEEDED!**

**MUSIC PROVIDED BY
DJ
BABY
FROST!**

**FOR MORE
INFORMATION,
PLEASE CALL
860.346.8295
OPTION 2.**

FOOD TRUCK • FUN ACTIVITIES • HEALTHY FOOD SAMPLES
MUSIC • BOUNCE HOUSE • HEALTH LEMONADE/TEA SAMPLES
COMMUNITY RESOURCES • FACE PAINTING • BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENINGS
HEALTH SCREENINGS • CPR DEMONSTRATIONS • AND MORE!!!

LOCATION: SHILOH RESOURCE CENTER | 346 BUTTERNUT STREET (LOWER LEVEL) | MIDDLETOWN, CT

THIS EVENT IS SPONSORED BY THE SHILOH BAPTIST COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

▶ Breaking the Cycle

- ▶ Food insecurity is often a symptom of larger systemic issues, by addressing these needs can support individuals and families achieve greater stability and self-sufficiency.

▶ Holistic Well-Being

- ▶ Non-food resources like healthcare services, housing assistance, mental health support, etc., contribute significantly to a person's overall being. Addressing these needs can help individuals and families achieve greater stability.

▶ Dignity and Respect

- ▶ Offering a space where individuals can make decisions about what their family needs with dignity and respect.



Summary

Community input

- ▶ Listen to the members of the community. They bring valuable input to the table and knows what they are in need of better than we do.

Identify potential community partnerships

- ▶ Seek out local organizations, non-profits, and community services that offer non-food resources.

Training

- ▶ Train your pantry staff and volunteers to be knowledgeable about available non-food resources in your community, as well as, to understand the cultural needs of the community members.

Resources

- ▶ Provide guests with informational materials and resources on-site, i.e. flyers, brochures, and listing local service providers.

Accessibility

- ▶ Create a Resource Directory, maintain an up-to-date resource directory that includes contact information and descriptions of non-food service providers. Make the directory accessible to the guest.

Key: Make a difference in the lives of community members!







The Importance of Connection

Subtitle: Accessing Non-Food Resources



Catholic Charities/Institute for the Hispanic Family
Nilda Morales-Rivera Director “El Centro” Equity Center and Hispanic Senior Center
45 Wadsworth St, Hartford, CT 06106




Non-food resources that we offer to our clients in the food pantry

We ensure that our clients receive a general quality of service when they arrive at our Food Pantry. I understand that we serve a population where people have different needs. Some of the services we offer in addition to food distribution are the following:

- Fill out Redetermination Forms
- Make sure the family receives food stamps if they qualify

Information for different programs that we have:

- Infants and Preschool program
- Senior Center daily program Monday through Friday
- Mental Health Clinic
- Charter Oak Clinic Services
- Entrepreneurship Classes
- Social Connection Events


- 
- Additional, we offer community events as social connections during the year, giving client an opportunity for greater awareness of community resources. Some of our events are highlighted through our Children's Festival during the Summer and the Three Kings Day in January.
 - This year, through donations of school uniforms, we hosted an additional community event, and we provided 130 families with school uniforms, bags with school supplies, children books, pajamas, COVID test, hand sanitizer, cleaning wipe and shampoo.



Children's Festival/GiveAway Event Pictures



The importance to build trust beyond food security



It is important to us build trust and a positive relationship with every person seeking any services at the “El Centro” Equity Center. Our site has a high population of immigrants families who come to looking for help and who may be afraid to seek services from other places due to their immigration status. The “ El Centro” Equity Center ensures all families feel secure, and connected with any and all resources beyond food security to help families achieve their fullest potential.



Strategy for connect with clients

Our food pantry volunteers are parents and elderly from the community who participate of the other programs within the Equity Center. Having volunteers connect with clients helps build familiarity and a sense of neighbor support neighbor. Volunteers are trained to ensure every client receive an assessment to ensure they are connected with any and all resources the client may be in need of outside of food security. Clients are provided with newsletter and new information of available resources.



Relationships with the organization in our community and how we establish our resource center

We invite organizations to partner with us and provide information or new resources available to the community. We often connect with agencies and ask them to come the first two weeks of each month to provide information to clients coming for groceries, or we ask for direct referral contact information to agencies that may be able to help.

Some of the agencies that we partner with at this moment:

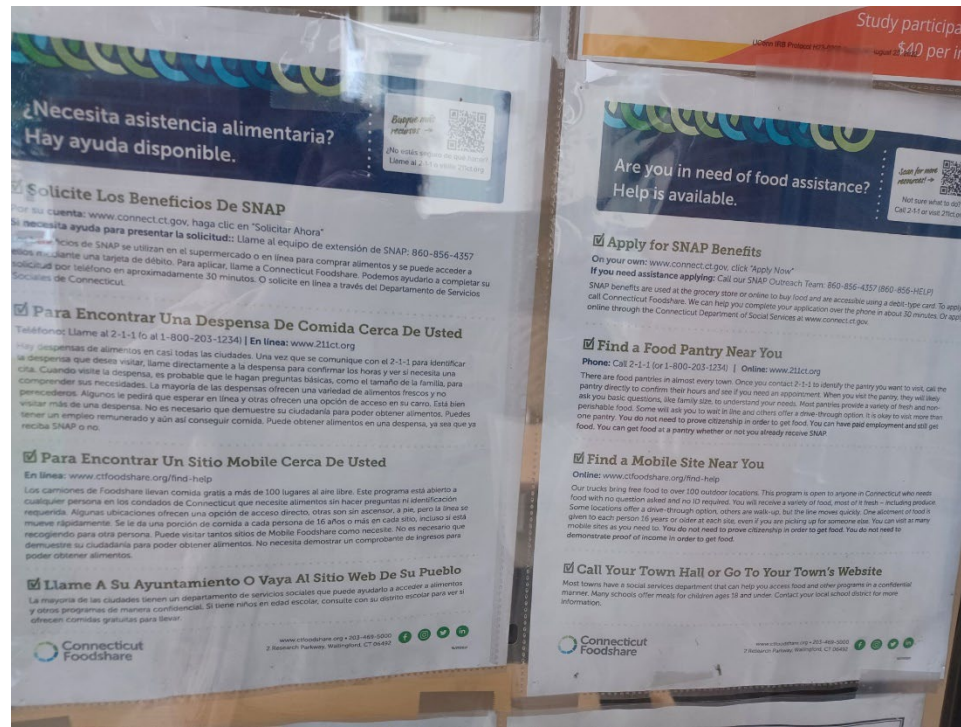
- Community Health Network of CT
- Regional School Choice and Open Choice
- Hartford Public School Registration
- Husky
- Assurance Wireless (Free Government Smartphone)
- Make the Road
- Mercy House
- Charter Oak
- Community Renewal Team-Energy Program
- WIC
- Southside Equity Center (Boost program-Emergency clothes)
- Unity CT (Rental Assistant)
- Providing the list of the food Pantries and Mobile CT FOODSHARE and Many others.



Tips that work best for us to connect with guests and resources

- Post flyers about new resources in the community
- Call and connect with other agencies to visit our food pantry during days of dispensation; especially at the beginning of the month
- Have resources available for when clients visit, and agency direct contact information for when referring.
- Hold events throughout the year to help promote provision of food and other services.
- Accept our guests- remember that we are not here to judge anyone. **We all have the same rights.**

Resources & Information Area





Future Plans

- Expand the Food Pantry to give families and client the opportunity to come in to the food pantry and select food items they prefer.
- Have an area with personal hygiene products available to clients.
- Provide information about SNAP and resources in the community. Including event brochures and community opportunities
- Case management





Tips to get started

- Gather information
- Set up an area of your program as a Resource Center
- Invite local community agencies and organizations during meal distribution
- Offer classes and workshops
- Examples of community partners:
 - 211
 - Local schools
 - Community Health Centers
 - Husky/ Medicaid

Connecting Guests to Additional Resources

Food assistance programs provide an opportune setting to connect guests to non-food resources.

What does connection mean?

People come to food assistance programs for food, but there are other factors rooted in poverty and systemic inequities that make it hard for households to be food secure. We know that it takes more than food to end hunger. Food assistance programs can offer wrap-around services to help build pathways out of food insecurity. Here are ideas for connecting guests to additional community resources.



The importance of community partnerships

A food assistance program doesn't have to be an expert on community resources. You can collaborate with existing community programs and services to support your guests. Get creative. Think of additional services that you think will be helpful for the people you serve. Ask your guests what services they would like to connect with. You can start slowly with referrals to one or two programs and then grow over time.

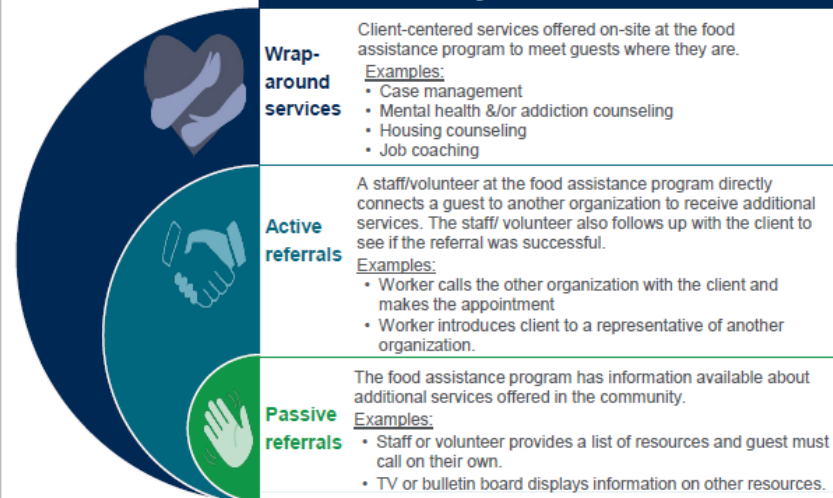
Examples of community partners:

- 211
- Schools
- Community action agencies
- Community health centers
- Husky/Medicaid
- Libraries
- Police department
- Department of social services

Examples of community resources that will create a holistic environment for food assistance programs:

Social Services	Health Care	Youth & Family Services	Classes & Workshops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching and case management • Social work • Active referral services • Connection to SNAP and/or WIC • Housing and utility services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection to insurance • Mobile health services • Mental health counseling/support • Substance use counseling/support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare • Parenting groups • Youth summer meal programs • Afterschool programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooking/nutrition • Job skills • GED • Finance • Computer training

Ways to connect



Tips to start connecting to community resources:

- **Gather information.** You can start by visiting 211ct.org from United Way to become knowledgeable about programs and services in your local area. Contact programs that are most needed by your guests and speak with their staff so you can provide a "warm referral" that is more personalized. Discuss eligibility criteria and ways to collaborate.
- **Set up an area of your food assistance program as a Resource Center** to provide information and referrals to connect guests to other services. Identify at least one staff member or volunteer who is knowledgeable about these services and can offer warm referrals. If possible, provide a computer and printer on-site so people can search for services online and enroll in programs.
- **Invite local community agencies and organizations** to your food assistance program to provide information and enroll people in their programs. A representative from another organization can set up a table at your site on a food distribution day and offer services on-site.
- **Offer classes and workshops on-site** at your food assistance program to provide one-stop shopping for guests.

Upcoming Network Partner Webinars and Info Sessions

- Community Resources Newsletter – third Thursday of the month
- Food Bank Fundamentals:
 - Online Ordering In Agency Express – first Thursday of each month
 - Creating a Welcoming Culture – fourth Thursday of each month
- Wednesday Webinars – third Wednesday of each month
- SWAP Office Hours – fourth Friday of each month

Register for upcoming sessions and view recordings of past sessions at ctfoodshare.org/webinars



Thank you for joining us today!

Please provide feedback on today's presentation:

ctfoodshare.org/WebinarSurvey



QUESTIONS?

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