



Transforming How We Serve Our Communities:

An Introduction to the Virginia Healthy Pantry Initiative
and Roundtable Discussion

Virginia Food Is Medicine Summit
March 20, 2024

Agenda

- 1 Intro to VA Healthy Pantry Initiative
- 2 Introduce the Roundtable Discussions
- 3 Roundtable #1
- 4 Roundtable #2
- 5 Ways to Partner

Introduction to Virginia Healthy Pantry Initiative (HPI)

Sydney Orgel

Health Initiatives Programs Manager- Feed More

Kara Snapp

Manager of Health Initiatives - Blue Ridge Area Food Bank

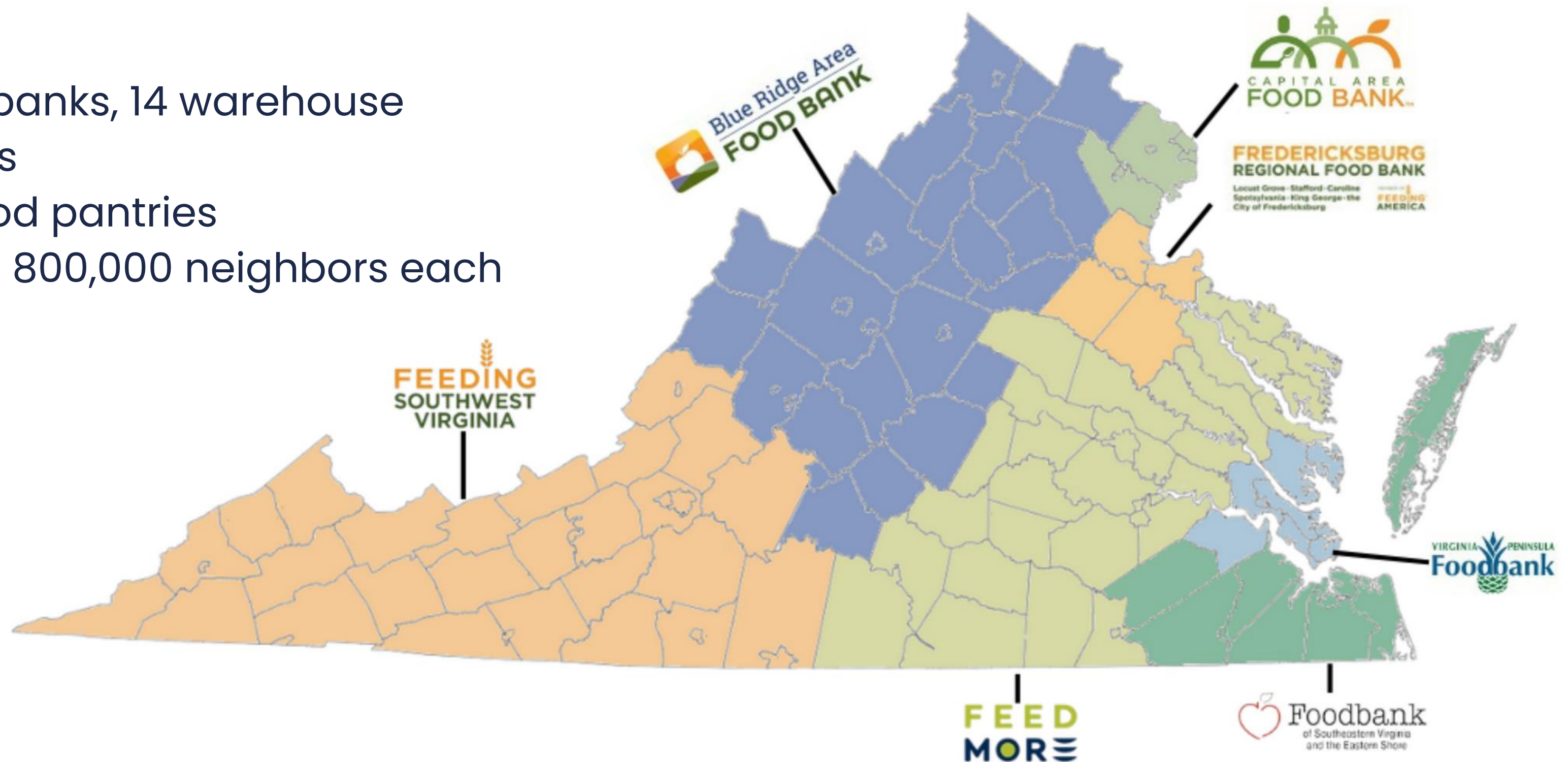
Kellie Del Signore

PSE Coordinator - Virginia Cooperative Extension

The Federation of Virginia Food Banks

Who We Are

- 7 food banks, 14 warehouse facilities
- 1,100 food pantries
- Serving 800,000 neighbors each year



Our Shared Health Equity Plan

THE FEDERATION OF VIRGINIA FOOD BANKS AND ITS MEMBERS ARE COMMITTED TO ...

Listening to Neighbors

listening to and learning from their neighbors to direct their collective efforts.

Embedding Health Equity

embedding health equity values, initiatives, and measurements into their strategic plans.

Strengthening Health Partnerships

being reliable, competent and trusted partners to support health equity.

Growing Network Capacity

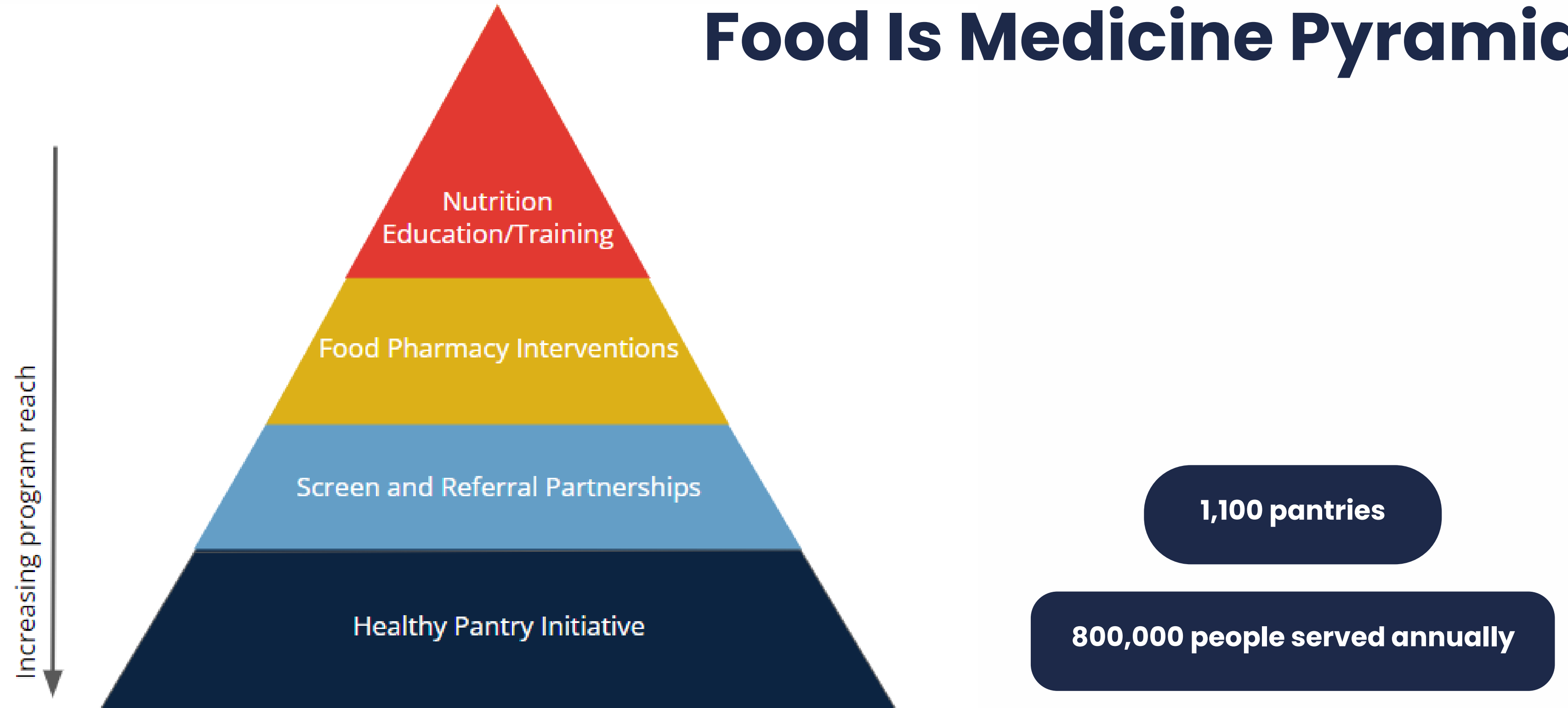
developing organizational and network capacity to ensure equitable access to healthy food across Virginia.



OUR MISSION STATEMENT

As the federation of Virginia food banks it is our shared responsibility to promote health equity by prioritizing access to nutritious and culturally responsive food, catalyzing cross sector partnerships, and creating a culture and system that supports a more equitable and just society.

Food Is Medicine Pyramid



Pantry-level investment will yield the broadest guest impact on health, equity, and nutrition.

Healthy Pantry Design Cohort

Neighbors Experiencing
Food Insecurity

Academic Partners

Food Bank staff

Health Partners

Community Partners

Food Pantry partners

We asked neighbors...

What would the ideal pantry experience look like?

Provides the right type of food - food that meets my dietary needs, religious and cultural requirements, etc.

Allows me to choose the foods I want

Open when I need it

Stress-free waiting

Located in a familiar setting/run by familiar or trusted people

Welcoming, nonjudgmental staff

Easy to get to, or the food comes to me!

"Clean" environment

Virginia Healthy Pantry Initiative

Definition

The Healthy Pantry Initiative is a movement guiding all interested pantries to implement more health-focused and neighbor-centered practices.

Purpose

All pantries in Virginia, regardless of their size or capacity, can implement healthy pantry practices to better support the health and nutrition of neighbors facing hunger

Vision

Neighbors facing hunger can achieve their desired level of health



Healthy Pantry Practices: Our Roadmap

The Healthy Pantry Initiative supports 20 best practices, which are broken down into four categories:

Food Availability	Foods offered through the pantry network meet the unique dietary needs of neighbors facing hunger.
Neighbor Centered	Barriers are removed so that neighbors facing hunger can access the foods they need to thrive.
Health Education	Neighbors are empowered with the tools and self-efficacy to make healthy choices.
Community Connection	Community partners work in collaboration to connect neighbors with additional resources and supports to help them thrive.

Food Availability

Foods offered through the pantry network meet the unique dietary needs of neighbors facing hunger.

- 1. Offer items from each of the five food groups**
- 2. Offer fresh fruits and vegetables**
- 3. Offer food choices that address specific chronic disease or dietary needs**
- 4. Offer foods to meet cultural/religious needs of neighbors**

Neighbor Centered

Barriers are removed so that neighbors can access the foods they need to thrive.

- 1. Enable neighbors to choose which types of food they would like from the pantry**
- 2. Collect neighbor feedback on pantry services and utilize when making organizational decisions**
- 3. Serve neighbors on evenings and/or weekends**
- 4. Address transportation barriers in at least one way**
- 5. Have materials, resources or processes for serving non-English speakers**
- 6. Serve anyone in need of food assistance, regardless of location, etc.**
- 7. Make accommodations for people with all physical and mental abilities**
- 8. Support a culturally inclusive and welcoming environment**

Health Education

Neighbors are empowered with the tools and self-efficacy to make healthy choices.

- 1. Offer healthy, product specific, recipe cards**
- 2. Use a visual system to highlight the location of healthy items within the pantry**
- 3. Offer nutrition and health education materials/resources**
- 4. Someone who regularly works with the food pantry is trained on MyPlate or a formal nutrition education curriculum**
- 5. Food demonstrations and tastings, cooking classes, or nutrition education sessions are offered on site**

Community Connection

Community partners work together to connect neighbors with resources & supports to help them thrive.

- 1. Provide information or additional resources on benefits, health, and other social needs**
- 2. Provide and/or receive neighbor referrals to community health or social benefit services**
- 3. Offer health services or social supports on site**

2023 HPI Assessment Data Highlights

659
Responses

Statewide
Response Rate:
60%

The purpose: to help capture practices pantries are doing each year and what the priority practices for implementing are

79% of pantries who completed the survey are committed to implementing one or more HPI practice

HPI Practices Pantries are interested in but need support



Offer foods to meet cultural/religious needs of neighbors



Offer food choices that address specific chronic disease or dietary needs



Offer nutrition and health education materials/resources



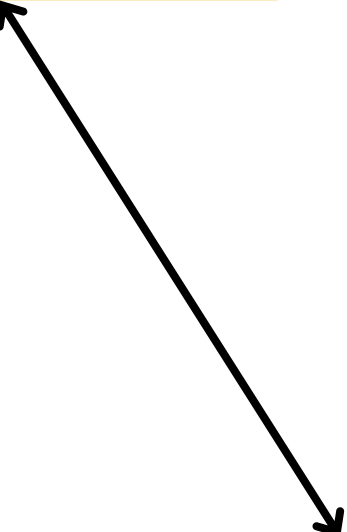
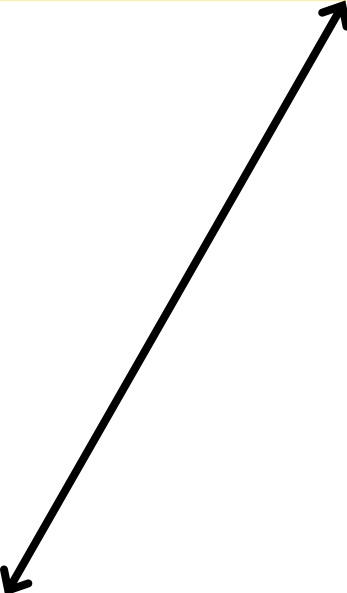
Someone who regularly works with the food pantry is trained on MyPlate or nutrition education



Have materials, resources or processes for serving non-English speakers



Steering Committee



**Education
Committee**



**Grants
Committee**



**Evaluation
Committee**

Healthy Pantry Resource Site

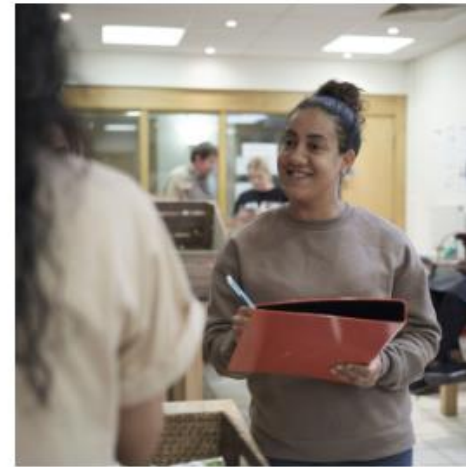


Healthy Pantry Practices

Explore resources to support practices related to the following four categories:



[Food Availability](#) ▼



[Community Connection](#) ▼



[Health Education](#) ▼



[Neighbor Centered](#) ▼



Have a resource we can add to this site?

Share it here!



Virginia Learning Center



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What are you looking to learn today?

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STATUS

DURATION

CLEAR FILTERS

ALL FILTERS

6 Results

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Programs



Acorn How To Videos and Resources



Introduction to Virginia's Healthy...



Next Steps for Planning



Offer Fresh Fruits and Vegetables



Offering Recipe Cards



Completed by end of March 2024

- Intro to HPI
- Next Steps/Planning of HPI
- How to Offer Recipe Cards
- SNAP Application Assistance
- Collecting Neighbor Feedback to Assist with Program Decision Making
- MyPlate Nutrition Education Training



Healthy Pantry Grants

- **Creating an annual grant cycle to support partner agencies**
- **Grants to invest in the implementation of HPI practices at pantries**
- **Currently: Each Food Bank is piloting with 1-3 pantries**



Measuring Impact

- **Annual Healthy Pantry Assessment to measure progress at the pantry level**
- **Evaluation tool/survey to measure impact at the neighbor level**

How can YOU transform how you're serving your community?

These resources and best practices can be implemented in ANY setting.

Let's discuss and learn from each other about how we can:

- **Improve access to culturally familiar and nutritious food**
- **Connect guests to community resources through partnerships and referrals**
- **Provide health and nutrition education**
- **Support education and access to vital benefits like SNAP and Medicaid**

Roundtable Discussions

Two rounds of Roundtable Discussions (choose 2 of the 4 topics)

Culturally Familiar Foods

Monica Davis

Registered Dietitian – Loaves and Fishes Pantry (*Charlottesville, VA*)

Health & Nutrition Education

Kellie Del Signore

PSE Coordinator – Virginia Cooperative Extension’s Family Nutrition Program (*Richmond, VA*)

Community Partnerships & Referrals

Harmonie Taddeo

Executive Director – Western Fairfax Christian Ministries (*Chantilly, VA*)

SNAP & Benefits Access

Cassie Edner

Public Benefits Attorney/Virginia Hunger Solutions Director– Virginia Poverty Law Center (*Richmond, VA*)

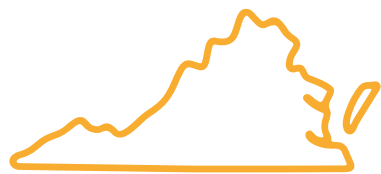
How to get involved with the Healthy Pantry Initiative at the state or local level:



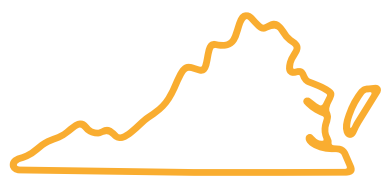
Take back ideas, resources, or partnerships you learned about in this session to your organization!



Partner with your local food bank to learn more about how to implement practices or how to offer support to pantries



Help create a training for the Virginia Learning Center



Fund pantries in implementing more health focused and neighbor centered practices

Contact Information is available on this session's handout.