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| 1. **History - Recap** |
| **ABOUT**  Committee of food bank and food pantry staff: examining how best to incorporate new programs and standardize practices across programs and counties, in order to better serve WA State’s emergency food system.  **OBJECTIVE**  Standardize service counts across WSDA Food Assistance programs’ participating agencies in Washington State.  **BIG PICTURE**  Service counts across the state are not standardized. As data has become increasingly important and scrutinized, this group has expressed interest in fine-tuning how and what is reported in FA state and federal and other programs. The subject of backpacks is meant to jumpstart the conversation of consistency and standardization among data collection and reporting methods. |
| Actions to Date - Recap |
| APRIL 2017 FA Advisory Committee and WFC Board made recommendations to update the EFAP monthly reporting form. It was acknowledged as an initial step forward, but not complete in addressing the questions above. (Backpack reporting started on EFAP forms in July 2017)JANUARY – JUNE 2018 The FA Advisory Committee was tasked to work with WSDA in coming up with and implementing a survey that would provide a better idea of the variety and scope of programs/services in which food is being distributed in one way or another by food pantries. We found that we needed a broader understanding of how additional services were being provided and if they were already being reported in some form or other.SEPTEMBER 2018 The survey was finalized and implemented. WFC board members were provided with lists of EFAP agencies in their districts and asked to reach out with both links to the online survey and a paper version to promote maximum participation.DECEMBER 2018 The taskforce received a total of 75 responses.JANUARY 2019 The taskforce reviewed the data and identified themes that might lend themselves to recommendations. |
| Survey Results – Recap |
| **Participating Agencies:** 75 agencies  **Responses:**  140 programs/services offered  **Supplemental vs. Full Service** **Responses** **Percent**  Distributes 2 or fewer food groups 9 6% Distributes 3 or more food groups 131 94%  **KEY TAKEWAYS:**  Backpack programs don’t report their service counts 41 percent of the time. Similarly, Homeless Bags don’t report 27 percent of the time. Both programs typically offer greater than 3 food groups, qualifying them as full service clients and full service pounds – not supplemental.  Backpack programs provide a greater quantity of food weekly (11.37 lbs.) with greater frequency than some counties’ average per client visit (8.2 lbs.).  Homeless bags average nearly 20 lbs. per distribution and are available at a greater frequency, sometimes on an as needed basis. |
| Things to Consider: |
| CURRENT DEFINITION:Backpacks - For the purpose of EFAP, clients who receive a food bag for one person, consisting of four meals, comprised of three of the five food groups for at least 2 days. This is typically given for the weekend and holidays when schools are closed.BACKPACK COUNT CONSIDERATIONS:Currently, there are a variety of methods for counting backpacks.Some contractors count per month, one client (new or returning) having received four backpacks, one every weekend during that time. This is done to create a more equal comparison to regular food pantry clients.Some contractors count one client per backpack. Four clients and four backpacks are reported each month, a 1:1 ratio. (Note: This is the most common method.)Some contractors provide backpacks for more than one child. In this scenario, when a backpack serves 3 clients in the same household, 3 clients and one bag are reported.Survey results show that backpack programs distribute over 11 lbs. per week, a service on par with full service food pantry client pounds per visit. |
| Suggested Changes to EFAP Service Counts |
| DECISIONS:Based on service counts survey and feedback over the past year, below are some considerations for the FA Advisory Committee. If you have other proposals or suggestions rooted in the work of the Service Counts taskforce, please share them.PROPOSAL 1:Maintain “optional” status for backpack reporting. (This is the same status as Special Dietary Needs and Supplemental reporting.)PROPOSAL 2:Adopt one client per backpack for EFAP reporting.This method is currently the most common among food pantries. Organizations who provide a bag intended for two people should report 2 bags and 2 clients using this method. (If this proposal is adopted, the count would be an automatic 1:1 ratio.)PROPOSAL 3Eliminate the backpack count from EFAP reporting completely.PROPOSAL 4:Report backpack pounds under Food Pantry Full Service if standards are met (four meals, 3+ food groups, intended for consumption over 2 days.)PROPOSAL 5:Recommended practice - Encourage food pantries to convert reported backpack numbers equitably to figures more comparable with food pantry full service for spring meeting subcontractor allocation conversations, when/if applicable.PROPOSAL 6:Other service counts suggestions? |
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