

Service Talk Shop: Food Bank/Home Delivered Meals & Medical Nutrition Therapy

Date: July 24, 2025

Location: Hayes Conference Room, BPHC

Culturally Responsive Meals

- Providers are working with clients to adapt meals to their specific tastes.
- There's an effort to balance cultural preferences with program limitations.
- Clients are asked for pantry recommendations and cultural food suggestions.
- Some clients inquire about foods that match their cultural background.
- Agencies gather feedback through conversations and suggestions.
- Menus are made more accessible with pictures and translations (e.g. Spanish/English).
- Pantry food swap boxes and feedback from community members are being used.
- Some programs allow clients to choose their groceries themselves or select from visuals.

Medical Nutrition Therapy / Food Bank Partners

- Some agencies mentioned employing dietitians to support nutrition services.
- There is a focus on providing education through dietitians.
- A few programs are able to deliver food and provide nutrition services together.
- Access to services is limited in some areas.
- Services may only be available on specific days and times.
- Resource Recommendation: Utilizing college interns in dietitian studies to provide education, Boston Children's "Food is Medicine" education

Client Feedback Tools

- Agencies are using digital suggestion boxes to gather client input.
- Some agencies have a community advisory board or council.
- Physical suggestion boxes are used in a few locations.
- A suggestion document is available onsite for client input.

- Client feedback is also gathered through surveys.
- Some agencies collect input using REDCap.
- Reassessments and meetings with clients are another method of gathering feedback.
- One note raised the question of whether materials are available in multiple languages and accessible to all clients.

Service Model

- Some agencies use an opt-in model for food services.
- Drop-in centers offering wrap-around services were mentioned.
- Grocery-style pantries are in use at certain sites.
- A few agencies operate on an appointment-based intake system.
- Partnerships play a key role in the service model.
- Some sites offer an on-site, grocery-style pantry.
- A hybrid model combining in-person and delivery options was noted.
- Providers may choose from multiple referral pathways.
- One agency mentioned a threshold delivery model based on community or building needs.
- Resources mentioned: Spoonfuls, Project Bread

Delivery Barriers

- A common issue is clients not being home or not answering the phone during delivery.
- Scheduling deliveries can be challenging due to coordination needs.
- A lack of permanent addresses presents storage and ethical concerns.
- Limited car space can make deliveries more difficult.
- Delivering to unhoused clients or shelters creates additional barriers.
- Some programs are designing volunteer-based delivery systems.
- Weather and climate-related issues can impact deliveries.

- Client mobility limitations are also a concern when delivering food.
- Resources needed: Transportation to grocery stores