

The 5 Elements of C.I. – Food Security Edition

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1. **Common Agenda:** All participants have a shared vision for change, including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed-upon actions.
 - Since January 2017, representatives from more than 20 agencies have come to the table to participate in meetings of the C.I. Food Security Oversight Committee and/or smaller workgroups. By being in the same place, at the same time, with the same understanding of what food insecurity looks like in Rapid City, committee members have found ways to work together and further the initiative’s mission, as well as their own agencies’ missions.
 - The “common agenda” items this initiative seeks to address include: increasing access to food in one or more of the 13 priority geographies of Rapid City (further explained in the next C.I. element); increasing access to food during long breaks from school; increasing access to food during the weekend and/or after business hours; increasing access to nutritious food options; and increasing access to food and nutrition education.

2. **Shared Measurement:** Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants ensure that efforts remain aligned, and participants hold each other accountable.
 - Mapping and data collection conducted in 2017 highlighted the fact that Rapid City has several low-income neighborhoods where access to food options is limited. The Food Security Oversight Committee ultimately focused its attention on 13 of these geographic areas and labeled them “priorities” for the purposes of food security.
 - In response, Feeding South Dakota – with a new mobile pantry funded by a supporter of the Food Security Initiative – added several mobile distributions in those neighborhoods, including an additional Saturday distribution each month.
 - Food Security Manager Mary Corbine worked with churches and other entities to open smaller, static food pantries in some of the priority areas.
 - Agencies that participate in the Summer Food Service Program, which ensures kids have access to free, well-balanced meals during the summer months, track numbers of meals served each summer. When funding permits, allowing accompanying adults to eat for free at those locations has helped to increase the overall number of kids served.

3. **Mutually Reinforcing Activities:** Participant activities must be differentiated while still being coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.

- New partnerships have formed between Meals on Wheels of Western South Dakota and the agencies that provide free summer meals to kids, including Rapid City Area Schools, Youth & Family Services and the YMCA, making it possible for Meals on Wheels to cover the expense of feeding accompanying adults, 60 and older, at summer food sites.
 - A shared marketing campaign helps to promote the summer food programs for kids, among other food security efforts.
 - Grant funding has supported special projects that address identified gaps in food services, such as weekend cooking classes for low-income families, and tokens at the Black Hills Farmer's Market to encourage kids to eat fresh produce.
 - In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and a need for more volunteers at two agencies seeing increased demand but a decrease in volunteers, a volunteer-incentive program funded by local philanthropy and administered by the Helpline Center has helped increase volunteer numbers at both Feeding South Dakota and Meals on Wheels.
4. **Continuous Communication:** Consistent and open communication is needed across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.
- The C.I. Food Security Oversight Committee began holding regular meetings in January 2017; since then, representatives from more than 20 agencies have come to the table to participate in meetings of the FSOC and/or smaller workgroups once a month, or as needed to discuss specific programs and projects.
5. **Backbone Support:** Creating and managing Collective Impact requires a separate organization(s) with staff and a specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative and to coordinate participating organizations and agencies.
- The Black Hills Area Community Foundation (BHACF) serves as the backbone organization for Rapid City's C.I. Food Security Initiative. It provides financial support through grants for programs and projects that aim to address the gaps in services, and it serves as a community collaborator and hub of communication for food security-related work.