



# Building Hunger Networks

Matt Russell

Resilient Agriculture Coordinator

Drake University Agricultural Law Center

Iowa Hunger Summit

October 13, 2015, Des Moines, IA

# Drake Ag Law Center

- Opportunities to study food and agriculture law  
[www.law.drake.edu/aglaw](http://www.law.drake.edu/aglaw)
- Outreach to the food and agriculture community:  
[www.drakeaglaw.org](http://www.drakeaglaw.org)
- My role: improving opportunities in Iowa's agricultural and rural economy

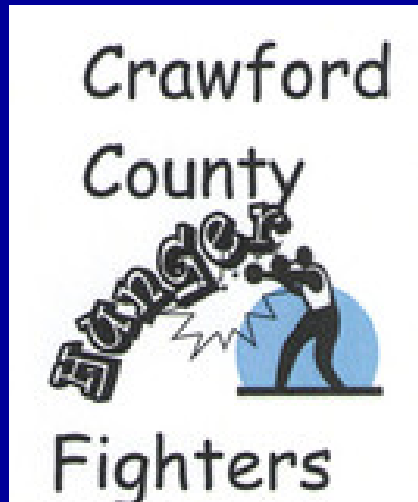


# Hunger Networks

- **Hunger**: a symptom of a situation caused by challenging and complex life circumstances
- **Network**: system of interconnected people
- **Hunger Network**: people and organizations coming together to overcome the challenging and complex life circumstances of people facing food insecurity.

# Local Networks

- Crawford County Hunger Fighters
- Organizations, businesses, individuals, volunteers



# Local Networks

- Ability to grow takes a network
- Identify resources
- Identify needs
- Recruit partners



# Local Networks

- Framing work around community
- Creating a structure to which community members can connect



# Institutionalizing a Network

- North East Iowa Food Bank
- Starting with individual relationships
- Intentionally embedding relationships in organizations
- <http://www.northeastiowafoodbank.org/>



# Institutionalizing Networking

- “It’s not about the food bank being the king of the community,” Barbara Prather, executive director.
- Lead with the person needing services.
- Work with other organizations to meet all of those needs, not just immediate food needs.





# Institutionalizing Networking

- Networking is part of staff development.
- Goal is the relationship, obviously personal, and it has to also be embedded throughout the organization.
- Things happen because of connections.
- Making networking part of the culture of the Food Bank builds the connections and sustains them.

# Creative networking on a shoestring budget

- Des Moines County Services Directory and Coordinating Group
- Monthly face to face meeting
- Sign in sheet
- Email distribution
- Keeping it simple
- Keeping it going

**This Directory is the result of a partnership between the Des Moines County Youth Development Coalition, the Des Moines County Public Health Department, and the Burlington Public Library.**

# Creative networking on a shoestring budget

- Keeping it staffed—distribution of labor
- No money involved
- Excellent opportunity for new staff among diverse service organizations.

*Community*  
*Action*  
OF SOUTHEAST IOWA

Zion United  
Church of Christ  
412 N. Fifth St., Burlington, Iowa  
(319) 752-2305  
[office@zionuccburlington.org](mailto:office@zionuccburlington.org)



# Iowa Hunger Directory

- Directories are helpful but often static
- Staffing is key to gather up and distribute information
- Networking is critical to the work of serving Iowans living with hunger
- Hunger is never simply an isolated condition

**STORIES OF IOWANS FIGHTING HUNGER**

CONNECT WITH LOCAL HUNGER-FIGHTING ORGANIZATIONS



# Iowa Hunger Directory

- Networking is active work
- Organizations must not only get into networks, they must leverage those relationships to better do the work.

[www.iowahungerdirectory.org](http://www.iowahungerdirectory.org)



# Thank You!



**Matt Russell**  
**Drake University Agricultural Law Center**  
**(515) 271-4956**  
[matt.russell@drake.edu](mailto:matt.russell@drake.edu)  
[www.law.drake.edu/aglaw](http://www.law.drake.edu/aglaw)