Building Hunger Networks

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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

http://www.crawfordcountyhungerfighters.com/
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.
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
Networking is active work

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

www.iowahungerdirectory.org
Thank You!

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