UTILIZING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS TO INCREASE ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOODS IN ORANGE COUNTY

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BACKGROUND

- Orange County is located in the Hudson Valley Region, 40 miles north of New York City
  - Approximately 375,000 residents
  - Three cities (Newburgh, Middletown and Port Jervis) with higher rates of health disparities, minorities and socioeconomically disadvantaged
  - City of Newburgh considered a food desert

- Creation of a Farmer’s Market in downtown Newburgh, walkable location for low-income residents
  - Started in 2008 once a week between July-October in the health department parking lot
HOW DID WE DO IT?

Partners

- House of Refuge-Bishop Woody
  - Non-profit organization sponsors market
    - Enables acquisition of an EBT machine and account to reimburse farmers for SNAP benefits/coupons

- Local community based organization (CBO)-Groundwork
  - Hired market manager responsible for onsite day-to-day operations
  - Cost – Approximately $2,000 for season (July-October)
Other CBOs participating include:

- St. Luke’s Cornwall Hospital (Community outreach)
- Cornell Cooperative Extension (Senior Coupons and education)
- Veterans Affairs (Coupon distribution)
- Planned Parenthood of Mid-Hudson Valley (Health education)
- Department of Social Services (Advertising)
- WIC program (FMNP coupon distribution and advertising)
MAINTAINING THE MOMENTUM

- Make it as simple as possible for partners to want to collaborate
  - Health Department staff ensures paperwork for operations, maintains EBT machine, keeps records for coupon distribution
- Find a champion that believes in your intervention
  - Sponsor is also a local school assistant principal invested in the community
- Utilize existing partnerships
  - Partner with Cornell Cooperative Extension to help build relationships with farmers each season
# Process Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Measure</th>
<th>Baseline Data (2014)</th>
<th>2015 Data</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average # of participants at Newburgh on Broadway Farmer's Market per season</td>
<td>1,400 participants</td>
<td>2,633 participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Farmers at Market</td>
<td>3 Farmers (range from 2-6)</td>
<td>4 Farmers (range 3-5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Farmers able to take SNAP benefits, Fresh Checks, and/or Veterans Coupons</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dollar amount of Veteran's Coupons Issued</td>
<td>No data available</td>
<td>$1,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amount of $ used through SNAP benefits (EBT machine)</td>
<td>$450</td>
<td>$698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of EBT machine transactions (proxy for # of individuals using SNAP benefits)</td>
<td>No data available</td>
<td>58 transactions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dollar amount of Senior Coupons Issued</td>
<td>No data available</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amount of Fresh Connect Coupons Used</td>
<td>$68</td>
<td>$264</td>
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FARMER’S MARKET IN ACTION
Challenge: Finding an accessible location for farmers and market patrons

- **Solution**: Worked collaboratively with the Planning department and input from the City of Newburgh to find no-cost location

- **Helpful Hint**: Be flexible when challenges arise (behind building not visible, moved to open lot next door, increased foot traffic)

Challenge: Perceived safety of neighborhood

- **Solution**: Ongoing efforts with multiple coalitions and police
CHALLENGES

- **Challenge:** Obtaining reliable volunteer(s) to run market
  - **Solution:** Developed a seasonal contract through County funds to pay a market manager who was connected to the community (understands culture and community)
  - **Helpful Hint:** EBT training available online however, FNS will work with manager over the phone if training is inconvenient

- **Challenge:** Attracting and keeping farmers
  - **Solution:** Persistence and assistance from local CCE to identify best matches with local farmers

- **Challenge:** Collecting appropriate data
  - **Solution:** Dedicated staff to both collect and determine appropriate indicators for ‘success’
RESOURCES

- New York Ag & Markets
- FNS (Food and Nutrition Service - Part of USDA)
- Farmer’s Market Federation (Webinars, Information, Tips)
  - http://www.nyfarmersmarket.com/
- Vendor Permit Requirements for New York State (Fact Sheet)
- Hudson Valley Bounty (Contact Info of Local Farmers)
  - http://www.hudsonvalleybounty.com/
- Local Organizations: Cornell Cooperative Extensions, Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Board, and Farm Bureau
  - Small grants are sometimes available for start-up costs
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How do we build collaboration and maintain relationships with non-traditional partners (ex. faith community and farmers)?

- How do you engage the media to cover successful interventions in your community?

- How do you encourage/engage low-income residents to spend their dollars on healthy foods?