



# Northwest Food Partners Network

## 2016 Annual Report



**It's been a wonderful year for the Northwest Food Partners Network.**

Read on for stories from 2016, our new directions and successes, and plans for the future of our work!

### **Mission:**

The Northwest Food Partners Network (NFPN) unites organizations in the mission to provide quality food, promote self-sufficiency and wellness, and build a bridge between emergency food providers and community issues.



### **History:**

In 2009, La Casa Norte founded the Northwest Food Partners Network with funding and guidance from the Chicago Community Trust. The network was created to support and align the work of small emergency food providers who work in a close geographical area. It was one of several similar networks organized in different areas of Chicago in the 1990's and 2000's, many of which still exist today.

The NFPN has historically included food pantry, free hot meal and produce mobile providers in Humboldt Park, Logan Square, West Town, Belmont Cragin and Avondale. We have also engaged local nutrition educators, other nonprofit leaders, social entrepreneurs, urban agriculture leaders and food justice advocates.

## 2016 HIGHLIGHTS

### Membership:

NFPN membership in 2016 included twelve Member Agencies and one Associate.

- La Casa Norte
- West Humboldt Park Development Council
- Breakthrough
- Chicago Hope at Armitage Baptist
- European American Association
- Iglesia Evangelica Emanuel
- Logan Square Supper Club
- McCormick Tribune YMCA
- Onward Neighborhood House
- San Lucas United Church of Christ
- Neighborhood Housing Services of West Humboldt Park
- New Community Covenant Church
- Northwestern Settlement (associate)



### New Strategic Plan:

In January 2016, representatives from twelve organizations engaged in a full-day strategic planning session to set the tone for the NFPN's future. The coalition developed a new mission statement, and three updated focus areas: capacity building, outreach and food rescue. In February, the network released a strategic plan for 2016-2017, which can be found [here](#).

### Community Referral Services:

In January, NFPN program directors expressed desire to increase wraparound services for their clients. In June the NFPN launched a Community Referral Services



program, which piloted at Community Dinners (now Logan Square Supper Club).

The initiative has since expanded to serve four additional agencies. A mental health intern works regularly on site at each agency, with interested clients, to assess needs and complete referrals to additional services, including housing, clothes, public benefits, childcare and domestic violence.

## Fundraising:

In 2016, the NFPN engaged in fundraising for the first time, in response to its member agencies' interest in capacity building.

- The NFPN raised **\$1,744.36** in 2016.
- Fundraising allowed us to establish the **NFPN Grantmaking Fund**, which in 2017 will sponsor emergency-food-related events and purchases at member agencies.
- Over **\$500.00** was given directly to member agencies to support their food pantries or hot meal sites.



## Food Donations & Food Rescue:

The NFPN has always engaged in food drives and solicited donations of fresh produce. However, in 2016 our network also began actively seeking supplemental household items that are high-need for pantry clients.

- *Spice It Up: A Business Challenge* was a new **in-kind donation drive** in Fall 2016 that successfully resulted in large donations of spices and cooking oil, diapers, cleaning products, toiletries and more.
- The *2016 Holiday Donation Drive* was a huge success, with a total of **2,720 pounds** of donations!
- Throughout the year, a portion of all fundraising proceeds were used to purchase supplemental items for member agency programs.



## Outreach:

The NFPN reached new audiences in 2016 through participation in outreach events like the 606 Block Party and networking events such as Plate of the Union. We published a new community food resource brochure in March 2016, which can be found [here](#). We completed a flyering campaign with outreach postcards about community hunger, a school partnerships email campaign, and established several new business partnerships.



**LOOKING FORWARD TO 2017**

## Here's what to expect from the NFPN in 2017.

**Consulting:** In 2017, several NFPN member agencies will be receiving consulting in areas like marketing, fundraising and volunteer management, through partnerships the NFPN has navigated with other nonprofits, businesses and schools.

**Donation Drives & Fundraising:** The NFPN has several events already planned for the spring and summer, including a *Spring Seasonings* in-kind donation drive and a fundraiser event at Potbelly's Sandwich Shop.

**Meetings:** The NFPN will continue holding general meetings once per month, typically on the 4th Thursday from 10-11:30am. Subcommittees will meet before and after each general meeting. Additionally, the NFPN will hold occasional social meetups, beginning with a Happy Hour in mid-January.

**Grantmaking Fund:** The NFPN is opening up applications in January for member agencies to apply for sponsorship of emergency food program purchases or events up to \$500.00.

**Outreach:** The NFPN will continue its community outreach initiatives in 2017, beginning by releasing a new food resource brochure in the spring, and is always seeking new members and partnerships.

**Capacity Building:** The NFPN will continue providing community referral services at member agency programs in 2017. We will also actively build the skills of our program directors through training, and will release a Personnel Capacity Building Toolkit in January to support its members on finding and maintaining volunteer, skilled and pro-bono resources for their programs.

**Thank you for being part of our journey.**

We can't wait to see what 2017 has in store.

Sincerely,

*Rachel Bhagwat*

Chair, Northwest Food Partners Network  
Community Engagement Coordinator, La Casa Norte  
O: 773-276-4900 x214 · C: 773-676-3182  
E: [rachel@lacasanorte.org](mailto:rachel@lacasanorte.org)



[VISIT OUR WEBSITE](#)

[LIKE US ON FACEBOOK](#)

La Casa Norte is the lead agency of NFPN.

Copyright © 2015. All Rights Reserved.