



Northwest Food Partners Network 2020 Strategic Plan

BACKGROUND

In 2009, La Casa Norte founded the Northwest Food Partners Network (NFPN) 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 on Chicago's Northwest Side. It was one of several similar networks organized in different areas of Chicago in the 1990's and 2000's, some of which still exist today.

Over the years, NFPN has developed into a network of non-profits and community organizations that run food pantries, free hot meal programs, and produce mobile sites in Humboldt Park, Logan Square, West Town, Belmont Cragin, Hermosa, and East Garfield Park. NFPN has also engaged nutrition educators, social entrepreneurs, urban agriculturists, food justice advocates, and other local nonprofits, businesses, farmers' markets and health centers are also involved with the network as associates. While membership is fluid, we had approximately 16 members and associates as of September 2019.

Since the network's founding, NFPN's lead organization has been La Casa Norte, a non-profit organization headquartered in Humboldt Park that serves youth and families confronting homelessness. La Casa Norte has managed the operation of NFPN and ensured its tenure to date.

OUR VISION

The Northwest Food Partners Network seeks to ensure that every resident of Chicago's Northwest side has access to quality food. To this end, NFPN works to increase the capacity of members to serve their communities. We also provide a forum for catalyzing parallel and cooperative anti-hunger action.

We envision operating programs that create a sense of community among the people we serve. We aspire to connect our neighbors with year-round access to fresh and culturally appropriate food. We seek to serve our neighbors in beautiful, dignified, destigmatized spaces where people share their stories and forge new friendships.

To create a network that comprehensively eradicates hunger, NFPN aims to catalyze leadership that is devoted, resolute, ambitious, sustained, community-based and compassionate. By engaging all resources available in our community, we will be able to holistically serve the needs and wishes of the people we serve.

WHO WE ARE

These are the organizational characteristics that will enable us to be successful in our endeavors.

- We are community experts, problem solvers, leaders, and visionaries.
- We work to enhance both our own capacities and those of our allies.
- We seek new opportunities and identify new trends.
- We share resources, insights, and best practices.
- We support each other's efforts to improve food security in our communities.

OUR GOALS

Establishing goals for NFPN's development and program implementation helps us prioritize and schedule activities. NFPN members already have responsibilities to fulfill for the organization which they represent. As such, clearly delineating our goals helps our members allocate time and attention to network-wide aspirations.

Our Quarterly Plan (a living, separate document) addresses how we will achieve our goals.

Short-Term Goals

Our Short-Term Goals for the upcoming year are grouped into five categories:

- 1. Increase Administrative Capacity**
- 2. Fundraise, Socialize, and Publicize**
- 3. Gain Knowledge and Share Resources**
- 4. Engage Directly**
- 5. Review and Renew**

- 1. INCREASE ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY**

Why: For the coordination of network activities and to guide long-term growth

How: Catalyze member engagement, leverage interns and volunteers

- 2. FUNDRAISE, SOCIALIZE, AND PUBLICIZE**

Why:

- Finance network operations and activities
- Galvanize relationships between members
- Create conduits for client and external stakeholder engagement with network

How: Find funding, organize events, market strategically

3. GAIN KNOWLEDGE AND SHARE RESOURCES

Why:

- Ensure NFPN is valuable to its members
- Ensure NFPN enhances community resource use

How: Organize educational events, promote decentralized leadership

4. ENGAGE DIRECTLY

Why:

- Learn how other members and external stakeholders address hunger and related social issues
- Create direct ties within our communities

How: Engage directly with each other, external stakeholders, and community members

5. REVIEW AND RENEW

Why:

- Acknowledge past successes and plan for the future
- Increase retention
- Prevent burnout

How: An Annual Member Strategic Retreat

Long-Term Goals

Our long-term goals are not explicitly addressed in our Quarterly Plan. However, they are programs and priorities we hope to eventually address. These goals can be addressed by revising the current Strategic Plan or addressing them in future Strategic Plans.

Our Long-Term Goals are as follows:

- Expand NFPN membership to include more community representatives
- Provide regular workshops and trainings for members
- Host an annual Urban Hunger Conference for the Chicago Metropolitan Area
- Ensure all our programming utilizes sustainably and equitably sourced foods
- Have food resources accessible to our communities any time, any day
- Implement policies and procedures that ensure volunteer interchangeability between members

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Northwest Food Partners Network is open to nonprofit organizations, food-related business allies, schools, faith-based organizations, youth groups, and other local groups committed to hunger and food security issues on Chicago's Northwest Side. Youth and adults from the NFPN community are also encouraged to participate by joining the Hunger-Free Community Advisory Board and/or affiliating with an NFPN member.

Membership is activated by signing and dating the Northwest Food Partners Network 2020 Membership Agreement, which implies support for the network's mission and a willingness to participate actively within the network.

Starting in 2020, a \$50 membership fee will be required to become a member of NFPN. This fee will be sliding-scale for member organizations who cannot afford it. Membership must be renewed by member organizations annually.

COMMITTEES

Committees create a time and place for member organizations to discuss issues in depth and establish plans of action. In order to catalyze collaboration and foster member involvement, we will reintroduce committees to the NFPN organizational structure.

Each NFPN member organization is required to participate in at least one committee. Failure to participate in a committee may result in member organizations not receiving certain member benefits, such as donations from food drives or food rescues.

Each committee will have a Chair. Committee Chairs establish the agenda for and lead Committee Meetings. Committee Chairs will also determine where, when, and how frequently each Committee meets. It is recommended that each committee meet at least six times per year (i.e. bi-monthly).

The Strategic Plan details Potential Objectives for committees. However, the Committee Chairs will work with their committee to establish the specific objectives they realistically hope to prioritize and accomplish over the course of the year. Committees are responsible for determining their objectives and activities for the year.

The Committee Chair will also designate who will take and distribute minutes for each committee meeting. At the end of each meeting, each committee will determine key developments to share or discuss with the entirety of NFPN at the next NFPN Monthly Meeting. Each committee will share these key developments with the NFPN Chair and AmeriCorps VISTA.

The following committees will be established:

Capacity Building Committee

Mission: Help NFPN members develop new skills and enhance current capacities

Focus Areas:

- Planning
- Workshops, Trainings, and Speakers

Funding and Food Committee

Mission: Help acquire the funding necessary to fulfill NFPN's budget

Focus Areas:

- Planning
- Grants
- Fundraisers
- In-Kind Donations
- Food

Communications and Networking Committee

Mission: Enhance NFPN's communications, marketing, and network reach

Focus Areas:

- Communications
- Marketing
- Networking

Racial Equity Committee

Mission: Ensure that a) NFPN is cognizant of structural racism in our communities, and b) NFPN programming promotes equality for people of color

Focus Areas:

- Research
- Impact Assessment
- Recommendations

HUNGER – FREE COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

Addressing hunger systemically requires direct participation and feedback from the communities we are serving. Community members have lived experience of local factors that are causing and perpetuating hunger. As a result, they will also be able to devise some of the most effective means of tackling hunger. Their inroads within the communities we serve can help us collectively generate sweeping support for anti-hunger efforts.

Bearing these factors in mind, the Northwest Food Partners Network will establish a Hunger – Free Community Advisory Board in 2020. The NFPN Hunger – Free Community Advisory Board (hereafter referred to as “the Board”) will have three primary goals:

1. Collect community knowledge that will inform NFPN's anti-hunger perspective and efforts.
2. Solicit participation of the Board's Members in NFPN programming and planning.
3. Leverage the Board's Members' relationships within our communities to generate sweeping community involvement in NFPN programming.

The Board will have the following characteristics:

1. The Board will be comprised of 10-20 Community Representatives.
2. The Board's Community Representatives will have the following characteristics:
 - a. Experienced or intimately witnessed hunger in their local community

- b. Committed to cooperatively ending hunger on the Northwest Side
 - c. Able to commit to attending the Board's meetings
- 3. The Board will meet once quarterly, unless the Board determines it would like to meet more regularly.
- 4. While the NFPN Chair Organization will suggest topics for the Board's meetings, the Board's meetings will be led by the Board's Members.
- 5. NFPN member organizations will be asked to participate in at least two of the Board's meetings annually.
- 6. NFPN member organizations will provide refreshments for at least four of the Board's meetings annually.
- 7. NFPN member organizations will make continuous efforts to recruit Community Representatives, adding new Community Representatives over time as attrition occurs.

The following steps will be taken to establish the Board:

1. NFPN member organizations will determine a date for the Board's first meeting.
2. NFPN member organizations will each inform community members of the opportunity to join the NFPN Community Advisory Board.
3. Interested community members will be invited to attend the Board's first meeting.
4. NFPN member organizations will lead the Board's first meeting, introducing NFPN, the Board, and the responsibilities of the Board's Community Representatives.
5. After the Board's first meeting, community members interested in committing to becoming a Community Representative on the Board will be asked to share their name and contact information.
6. Community members interested in becoming a Community Representative will determine which day would work best for the Board's next meeting.

IMPACT EVALUATION

Regularly assessing NFPN's impact is essential. Our goals are varied and diverse. As such, it is necessary for us to use multiple indicators to assess our success. These assessments will inform our future programming and justify funding applications.

Capacity Building Impact Indicators

- **The Alliance to End Hunger's Self-Assessment Workbook Tool**
 - Description: A self-administered survey measuring organizational development
 - Frequency: Twice annually
- **Quarterly Plan Reflection**
 - Description: A plan of scheduled activities which we can use to determine how frequently we have achieved the goals and activities we aimed to achieve
 - Frequency: Twice annually

Funding and Food Impact Indicators

- **Budget Tracker**
 - Description: An account of our expenses and funds

- Frequency: Constantly updated
- **Food Rescue Tracker**
 - Description: An account of how much food we have rescued and where it has been used
 - Frequency: Constantly updated
- **Foodraising Tracker**
 - Description: An account of how much food we have obtained via food drives
 - Frequency: Updated every foodraising event
- **Food Insecurity Assistance Tracker**
 - Description: An estimated account of how many food insecure people we have helped in each neighborhood we serve
 - Frequency: Quarterly
- **The Alliance to End Hunger’s Self-Assessment Workbook Tool**
 - Description: A self-administered survey measuring organizational development
 - Frequency: Twice annually
- **Survey of Community Awareness of NFPN**
 - Description: A survey of NFPN’s name recognition and rapport within the communities we serve
 - Frequency: Quarterly
- **Community Health Surveys**
 - Description: Regular surveys measuring various hunger and health metrics in communities which hospitals serve
 - Frequency: Not Applicable (external)

Communications and Networking Impact Indicators

- **The Alliance to End Hunger’s Self-Assessment Workbook Tool**
 - Description: A self-administered survey measuring organizational development
 - Frequency: Twice annually
- **Member Attendance Tracker**
 - Description: An account of member attendance used to evaluate retention and involvement
 - Frequency: Constantly updated

Racial Equity Impact Indicators

- **The Alliance to End Hunger’s Self-Assessment Workbook Tool**
 - Description: A self-administered survey measuring organizational development
 - Frequency: Twice annually
- **NFPN Racial Equity Survey**
 - Description: A survey administered to NFPN members and the NFPN Hunger-Free Community Advisory Board regarding racial equity in our communities
 - Frequency: Twice annually

DRAFT BUDGET

Our budget enables us to achieve our goals by implementing the activities outlined in our Quarterly Plan. Monetarily, this year’s budget will be primarily allocated to outreach and capacity building expenditures.

Item	Source	Member Cost	NFPN Cost	Notes
Speakers	<i>End Hunger Consulting</i>	n/a	\$300	<i>\$50 gift card per speaker, six speakers</i>
Refreshments for meetings	<i>Various</i>	n/a	\$360	<i>\$30 per month</i>
Outreach materials	<i>Vistaprint, NFPN printers</i>	n/a	\$240	<i>\$20 per month</i>
Food Drive – Flyers	<i>Vistaprint, NFPN printers</i>	n/a	\$50	<i>To reimburse members for printing costs</i>
Food Drive – Facebook Ads	<i>Facebook</i>	n/a	\$40	<i>\$20 per Food Drive</i>
Member retreat	<i>NFPN member or external event planner</i>	\$50	n/a	<i>For food and space</i>
		TOTAL:	\$990	