



A strong future relies on strong collaboration

In the Spring of 2021, Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank launched our Stakeholder Engagement Initiative (SEI) to identify how we can make our work even more effective. Hundreds of individuals and organizations have shared their thoughts, ideas, advice, and wisdom with the Food Bank team.

Here's a snapshot of where things are at:

In Part 1 (Spring/Summer 2021), over 1,200 stakeholders identified what works well with the Food Bank today, what's not working well, and offered suggestions for us to consider for the future. They said:

- throughout the pandemic, the Food Bank has been responsive to the needs of local communities by providing critical supports, being a trusted institution that is responsible, reliable, and has great staff;
- more variety is needed in food type and more flexibility in food access;
- it can be difficult to know who to contact at the Food Bank;
- there's still a stigma associated with using the Food Bank; and
- there's an opportunity to focus more on healthy foods, reach more underserved communities, and strengthen information sharing.

In Part 2 (Fall 2021), we went back to our stakeholders to test 10 ideas in response to what we heard in Part 1. Over 900 stakeholders participated in Part 2, and overall, there was strong support for ideas proposed by the Food Bank to:

- provide more choice in food type & flexibility in access;
- collaborate with the network and communities; and
- work toward eliminating hunger.

We're now in Part 3 of the process,

and we're proposing a path forward based on all of the feedback we've received to date. Participants in Part 2 told us, and we agree, that collaboration is essential to strengthen services provided to the community, and to provide more choice and work towards eliminating hunger. We want to use Part 3 to work with our stakeholders to start identifying the processes, infrastructure, and people we need to best support strong collaborations with our network of partners and communities.

Our proposed path forward that we would like your feedback on includes:

Focusing on collaboration

to make our work more effective, and to help advance choice and eliminate hunger



Respecting each stakeholder's strengths

to find where gaps can be filled and efforts combined without duplicating efforts



Ongoing learning

To share information, maintain flexibility and responsiveness, and create permanent feedback loops



INSIDE THIS DISCUSSION GUIDE we have included more information on the ideas tested and feedback received during Part 2 of the process, questions for you, and our proposed approach to implementing changes necessary to make our work even more effective. For more information on the Stakeholder Engagement Initiative, including summaries of feedback received to date and previous Discussion Guides. Checkout the website at www.pittsburghfoodbank.org/feedback or contact 412-460-3663 ext. 498.

PART 1

Spring 2021

Understand what works well, what's not working well and identify suggestions to consider.

PART 2

Fall 2021

Test ideas that respond to the strengths, challenges & opportunities in our communities & region as shared in Part 1.

PART 3

Winter 2022

Share & refine a proposed path forward informed by feedback on ideas tested in Part 2.

Part 2: Ideas shared & Feedback received

In October and November 2021, the Food Bank shared and sought feedback from our stakeholders ten ideas (listed below) for how to make our work even more effective, based on the feedback received in Part 1. A range of stakeholders from across southwestern Pennsylvania provided feedback including community members, pantries, community service organizations, life stabilization partners, regional leaders, Food Bank volunteers, donors, Food Bank staff and Board, and many others. Thoughts were shared through virtual meetings, an online survey, and one-on-one discussions in the community.

These were the ideas tested by the Food Bank during Part 2:

How to provide MORE CHOICE (in food type and access)	How to best COLLABORATE with the network and communities	How best to work towards ELIMINATING HUNGER
<p>Idea 1 (Food Type): Food Bank creates different types of pre-packed boxes and/or backpack kits</p> <p>Idea 2 (Food Type): Food Bank supports pantries in offering more food choice</p> <p>Idea 3 (Food Access): Food Bank provides more support to pantries to be open more often</p> <p>Idea 4 (Food Access): Food Bank increases its direct service delivery across its service area</p>	<p>Idea 5: Food Bank builds capacity of the network</p> <p>Idea 6: Food Bank deepens its relationships with the network and communities</p> <p>Idea 7: Food Bank has a more active role in the community</p>	<p>Idea 8: Food Bank strengthens connections to other services</p> <p>Idea 9: Food Bank shows leadership in its operations</p> <p>Idea 10: Food Bank expands its advocacy efforts</p>

Here are the key takeaways from Part 2:

- *Participants appreciated the opportunity to continue the conversation.* Regardless of who replied or which country they were replying from, overall, participants were generally receptive to all of the ideas.
- Ideas supporting more choice in food type and access (Ideas 1-4) were, overall, the highest priority for all participants.
- *Collaboration was identified as the way to provide more choice and to best work towards eliminating hunger.* The Food Bank needs to leverage, not duplicate or take over the efforts of others.
- *Efforts to eliminate hunger need to be driven by the social determinants of health.*
- *Implementation of ideas need to start with improvements to the Food Bank's internal systems before trying to make external changes.*
- *Action in the most underserved areas with the highest needs should be prioritized.*



Part 2: Detailed Feedback on the Ideas Tested

<p>How to provide MORE CHOICE (in food type and access)</p>	<p>How to best COLLABORATE with the network and communities</p>	<p>How best to work towards ELIMINATING HUNGER</p>
<p>PARTICIPANTS FEEDBACK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choice is what communities see and what they've said they need – choice in food type and flexibility in food access; Providing more choice is important to support equity, dignity, independence, and avoiding food waste; Providing choice requires flexibility to meet the varying needs of local communities - one size doesn't fit all; Mixed feedback for pre-packed boxes; Longer and more flexible hours are needed; and Significant focus on transportation 	<p>PARTICIPANTS FEEDBACK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More choice and eliminating hunger are only possible through collaboration. Food Bank needs to leverage, not duplicate or take over efforts of others; Communities and the Food Bank network of partners know their own needs best; Need better communication of information and services from the Food Bank to the network, and among the network (referrals, co-location); and Food Bank should focus on areas that are the most underserved. 	<p>PARTICIPANTS FEEDBACK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efforts to eliminate hunger need to be driven by the Social Determinants of Health and be collaborative; Food Bank has an important role to play in providing referrals and information to community members and organizations about other services available; Food Bank can strengthen its advocacy by working with a wider number and wider range of organizations; and Support for the Food Bank showing leadership in its operations, including providing workforce development opportunities and resources for people to find jobs.

Ideas identified by participants as missing, included:

- a focus on health (as opposed to hunger only)
- education (especially around different food choices and how to prepare them)
- the importance of communication (increasing awareness of local services, improved relationships between partners and the Food Bank)
- mention of youth (both in terms of workforce development and education)
- the role of technology

Participants also had implementation suggestions, including:

- evaluate and strengthen the Food Bank's internal systems before trying to make external changes
- prioritize action in the most underserved areas with the highest need
- respond to feedback so stakeholders know next steps and why decisions were made
- work quickly to make changes that will better serve communities



We want to hear from you!

We want your feedback for the Stakeholder Engagement Initiative survey. Help us build the Food Bank of the future!

There are three ways to participate:

1. Take the survey online at pittsburghfoodbank.org/feedback.
2. Participate by mail. Call Erin at 412-460-3663 ext. 498. Leave a message with your name and address, and the survey will be mailed to you.
3. Scan the QR code below to take the survey on your smart phone.



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Part 3: Getting your thoughts, and continuing the process beyond the Stakeholder Engagement Initiative

Questions for you:

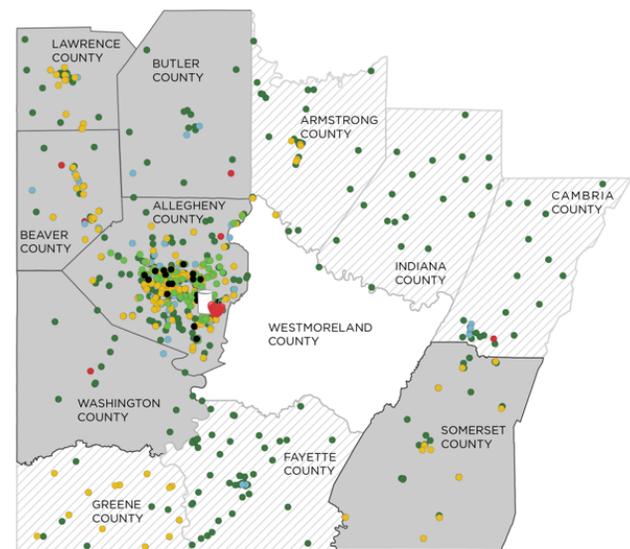
1. **What does it mean to be a good collaborator?**
 - What would you look for?
 - What makes a collaboration successful?
2. **How would the collaboration ideally happen to achieve shared objectives?**
 - What would the Food Bank do?
 - What would the network partners and community members do?
3. **What are the 2 or 3 most important steps that the Food Bank can take to demonstrate its commitment to collaboration?**
4. **How would you like to be involved, going forward?**

Do you have any other advice?

You can share your answer to these questions on our website. The feedback form will be live until **February 11, 2022**.

While you (and we) answer these questions, keep in mind that we are trying to:

- Strengthen capacity of the network
- Deepen relationships with the network and communities
- Strengthen connections to other services
- Expand advocacy efforts
- Provide more flexibility in food access, more choice in food type, and work to eliminate hunger through stronger collaboration



Dots on the map represent approximate locations of partners and programs in the Food Bank's network across southwestern Pennsylvania. For more details, see Part 1 Discussion Guide online at pittsburghfoodbank.org/feedback.

pittsburghfoodbank.org/feedback

Next Steps & Implementation

Given the strong focus on collaboration, the Food Bank proposes to take an incremental approach to moving forward with the results of the Stakeholder Engagement Initiative – working together with partners and communities throughout the 11-county service area of the Food Bank.

What this would look like is:

- **in the SHORTER TERM**, the Food Bank would use learnings from the SEI to inform the creation of the Food Bank's next Strategic Plan – which is where human and financial resources are allocated to support objectives
- **in the MEDIUM TERM**, the Food Bank would create permanent feedback loops to strengthen the network and inform Food Bank decision making
- **in the LONGER TERM**, the Food Bank would co-create the delivery of some services and programs with those that use Food Bank services, partners and communities.

In the Fall of 2022, the Food Bank will share an update on how the results of the SEI have been integrated into the Food Bank's new Strategic Plan. As with Parts 1 and 2 of the SEI process, we will also broadly share feedback received during Part 3 and post it to our website. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to get in touch with Erin Spangler, SEI Project Manager, at 412-460-3663 ext. 498.