Developing Leaders in a Community Group

A Manual by
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HUNGER TASK FORCE

Welcome!

One of the most important things you can do as the organizer of a community group is to develop and educate leaders. Better leaders make for a more sustainable group, and educated members make for a stronger more successful group.

This guide is meant to help you in the process of educating group members and developing group leaders. It is based on the experiences of an Emerson National Hunger Fellow, Lori Leibowitz, who worked on starting a community-based advocacy group called Voices Against Hunger at Hunger Task Force. This manual includes lessons she learned, resources she used, and workshops she facilitated.

This manual is *not* meant to be a guide to community organizing, rather, a guide to help you develop leaders for your group.

There are several ways in which you can use this guide. You can use it to learn about the process of leadership development by reading the entire notebook. You can learn to do specific tasks like planning a workshop or keeping track of leaders by focusing on the "Nuts and Bolts" section and then studying the examples. You can also use this guide for its pre-planned workshops. Everything you need to facilitate these workshops, including scripts, handouts, and visual aids, is in this notebook. The handouts and visual aids are also on the disk in the front pocket of the binder.

Whether you want to learn new skills or simply need some new ideas, this guide can help you to develop great leaders.

Happy training!

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DEFINING LEADERS

All groups need leadership, and it is especially important in a community group that the leaders come from and represent the membership. Members are more likely to respect someone who is like them.

It often happens in these groups that the capable, dedicated people who are excited to lead the group do not have very much experience being leaders. It is your job as the group's organizer to help them develop into good leaders. And if some of the leaders are already good, experienced leaders? There is always room for improvement. One of the extra benefits people get from being a leader in a group rather than just a member is the opportunity to develop their leadership skills.

It is important to develop the leadership skills of the group's members, as well. The people who are leading the group now cannot lead the group forever, so it is always important to have well-trained people to take their place.

If the leaders and members of your group are well trained, it will be much easier for the group to reach its goals.

What do leaders do?

Leaders are involved with every part of what the group does. They recruit members. They run meetings. They plan and develop issue campaigns. They are the mouthpiece of the group.

Organizers do not lead. They exist in the background to train and help the leaders do their jobs. It is the leaders who choose issues (solutions for which the group will work). The leaders should also strategize about how to achieve the group's goals. An organizer helps the leaders through this process, making sure that the leaders know why they are performing certain actions and ensuring that they have the skills to run the group and implement the campaign(s).

What qualities do leaders possess?

While you can and should train leaders, there are some necessary qualities leaders must inherently possess. Leaders must be committed to the group and its mission. They must be willing to show up at most or all of the groups meetings and to encourage others to attend. They must be willing to do work outside of the group's scheduled meeting times. Part of being a leader is finding and motivating members, and only someone who is excited about and dedicated to a group will be able to find members.

Leaders must also be willing and able to work with others in the group. They must be willing and able to question systems and institutions. Along with this healthy dose of skepticism, a leader must also believe in the group's ability to make change and believe in his or her own ability to make this happen.

How do you spot a potential leader?

A leader is someone who has followers, who gets others to join the group or brings others to events.

A leader is someone from the community whom others trust.

A leader is someone who listens to others and values their input.

A leader is willing to learn.

A leader is reliable. She does what she has committed to doing.

A leader sets an example for the rest of the group.

TYPES OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

There are two main areas in which leaders can be developed: leadership skills and knowledge about the issues on which the group is working.

I. Developing Skills

Some skills that are important for the leaders in a community advocacy group are:

- Recruiting members
- Creating agendas/facilitating meetings
- Researching issues
- Strategizing an issue campaign
- Citizen advocacy (making your case to public officials)

These skills can be taught in a variety of ways:

- Large group workshops
- Individual trainings
- At leader team meetings

When deciding how to go about training your leaders, you must first consider who needs to be trained on what skills. For example, if your group is an advocacy group, it is essential that all members of the group be trained in citizen advocacy. In this case, it will probably be most effective to run a larger *workshop* open to the entire membership.

Other skills such as meeting facilitation may be important for the leaders but less important for the membership. These skills can be taught either formally or informally at a meeting the group's leaders.

Sometimes leaders need to be trained on a *one-on-one* basis. Each leader will bring to the group his or her own skills, strengths, and weaknesses. Talk to the leaders to determine what they feel are areas of improvement. Then, work with them individually to build those skills. Meeting with the leaders individually to work on basic skills will also help you to get to know them better and to build trust.

Skills training is an ongoing process. Everyone needs work on many skills. You should help your leaders prioritize those skills based on what they will be doing for the group, but do not forget to come back to other skills that they have mentioned. You can use the tracking chart in the Helpful Forms section (Tab 7) to help you remember who needs work on what skills.

The Citizen Advocacy Workshop in this guide (Tab 4) is a good example of a group skill-building workshop.

II. Knowledge

A. Developing Knowledge

Knowledge is one of the most important and one of the most often overlooked parts of leadership. Leaders cannot inspire members to act if they cannot explain the issues or do not know what needs to be done. Helping leaders understand the issues on which they are working helps them to motivate people, strategize issues, and advocate more effectively.

Knowledge on issues can be imparted through *workshops for the whole group*, *workshops for the leaders*, and through *one-on-one meetings* to explain specific issues or answer specific questions.

When issues are discussed in large *group workshops* people can share ideas and learn from each other. This also allows participants to think through and hone their own positions on the issue. The Food Stamp Workshop (Tab 5) in this guide is a good example of a knowledge development workshop for the whole group.

One-on-one meetings are helpful when someone is self-conscious about not knowing an issue well, when someone cannot attend a larger training, or simply as a vehicle to build a stronger relationship with a leader. Individual trainings about issues are a wonderful way to build trust. People are often more willing to admit that they lack knowledge or understanding about an issue than they are to admit weakness on a particular skill. After leaders know you better and respect your ability to teach them, they will be more willing to ask you for help in other areas.

In addition to workshops and meetings, it is important to prepare fact sheets on the group's issues. This ensures that the group has consistently factual information and can refer back to it when necessary.

B. Knowledge Development as Recruitment

In any community group, growing membership is always an important goal. If you can help other people to understand your group's issues, they will be much more likely to join or support your group. The community can be educated informally through media attention that your group gets or through letters to the editor that members write. The community can also be educated through more *formal workshops*. If you can figure out a fun, interesting, and perhaps shocking way to teach people about your issue, they will join you. The Food Stamp Application Simulation (Tab 6) provides one such example of this kind of workshop.

Note: While there are separate sections on skill and knowledge development in this book, they should never actually be completely separate. When learning about an issue, a leader can also learn to strategize, speak on, or facilitate a meeting on that issue. When working on skills, all examples can be issues on which the group is working.

DESIGNING A WORKSHOP

This section offers step-by-step instructions on planning a workshop. A template to plan your own workshop is provided on pg 56 in the Helpful Forms section (Tab 7).

Before you begin

Answer the following questions:

1. *What are the goals of the workshop?*

2. *For whom are you planning the workshop?*
Do they have experience with this topic? What do they know already? How old are they? Are all of them literate? Are they members of your organization or people you would like to recruit? Approximately how many people will be there?

3. *What information do you need to present to achieve these goals with these people?*

4. *How much time do you have?*
An hour? A day? Five weekly sessions?

5. *What is your working space like?*
Are there tables in the room? Moveable chairs? Electrical outlets? Is there a projection screen or a white wall? Is there a blackboard to write on? Is the room big enough for people to spread out for activities?

Figuring out how to present the information

Once you have a clear idea of what you want to accomplish at your workshop and what the parameters are for accomplishing that goal, it is time to start planning.

First, you need to figure out how to present the information.

Here are a few things to keep in mind when conducting a workshop:

- People learn best by doing.
- People remember things better if they experience the information in two or three different ways (seeing and hearing).
- If the workshop moves quickly, people will have an easier time paying attention.
- There are as many teachers in the room as there are workshop participants. People can benefit from each other's experiences.
- Both time and space are limited

Divide the information you want to present into organizational sections that make sense to you. With each section, figure out how to present the information so that it is dynamic and gives people the opportunity to learn from each other.

If you want people to understand how something works, use a diagram.

If people are learning a skill, have them practice it in the workshop setting.

If you want to sensitize people to someone else's problem or point of view, create a role-play so that experience that person's point of view. The Food Stamp Application Simulation (Tab 6) is a good example of this.

Some creative ways to present information –

Role Plays – give participants a situation and ask them to demonstrate either what they would do in the situation or assign them the identity of someone else and have them demonstrate what that person would do.

Case Studies – give specific examples to illustrate the topic and have participants discuss them.

Jigsaw Learning – split participants into groups and give each group information on a different piece of the topic. Then, reshuffle everyone into groups with one participant each from each of the original groups. Then, give them discussion questions so that they can teach each other what they learned.

Foot Barometer – have participants stand in different parts of the room if they agree or disagree with a statement, or let them indicate levels of agreement/anger, etc. by making the room a continuum. Allow them to discuss their positions.

Games – turn the information into your favorite board game or game show. Just make sure the activity is age-appropriate for the audience.

Simulation – recreate a situation so that participants will feel a specific emotion. The exercise below is a good example of that.

EXAMPLE:
An organizer wanted workshop participants to understand that county workers make errors with food stamp calculations because they are overworked and lacking in the tools and training that they need. To express that to people she planned the following activity:

Participants were given about two minutes to do the following math problem:

1. Add up the following list of numbers:

    8,210
    455
    6,675
    944
    73

2. Subtract from that total the sum of the following numbers:

7,731
663
767
273
68

3. Divide that answer by 5

While they were working on the problem, someone called the workshop room from a different room. The facilitator answered the phone and told different people in the room that they had a client waiting or that they'd received a fax or that they should come pick up a message, etc. After two minutes, she told participants to put their pens down.

Then, she led a discussion using the following questions to facilitate:

1. How many of you got 1,371?

2. How many of you made some kind of error?

3. What do you think are some of the things that prevented some people from getting the correct answer? Or what would have helped people to get the right answer? (not enough time, distracted, no calculator, don't remember long division, etc.)

4. These are some of the same things that caseworkers have to deal with, so they also make errors that lead to some of the grave consequences we've already discussed. What do you think can be changed in our system so that they will make fewer errors? (more workers, better training, etc.)

How can we make that happen?

This short activity helped people figure out for themselves the connection between high error rates and the shortage of caseworkers. People could better understand the frustration of caseworkers because they felt it. They were also able to draw their own conclusions about what caused that frustration. The facilitator never explicitly said that it was the shortage of caseworkers. Instead, she asked a series of questions that led participants to come to that conclusion on their own. The activity also led into an action conversation so that participants could get ideas from one another and motivate each other.

Putting the workshop in order

When you have determined how to present all of your information, you will need to put everything in a logical order, and plan out how you will transition from one topic or activity to the next.

A book called Active Training by Mel Silberman (see Resources, Tab 8) gives some good guidelines on how to sequence training activities:

1. *Build interest and introduce new content before you delve more deeply.* Set the stage for learning by using an activity that hooks participants' interest or gives the big picture.
2. *Place easy activities before demanding activities.* Get participants settled in and warmed up before you put them through hard work.
3. *Maintain a good mix of activities.* Vary training methods, the length of activities, the intensity of activities, and the format.
4. *Group together concepts and skills that build on each other.* Generally, we learn more easily when one idea is an outgrowth of another.
5. *Provide subskills before practicing complex skills.* It's better to learn the parts before the whole.
6. *Close training sequences with discussion of "so what" and "now what."* Have participants consider the implications of the course content for themselves and plan their next steps back on the job.

Sample sequence of a workshop:

I. Introductions
II. Background information
III. Activity
IV. Discussion
V. Activity
VI. Discussion
VII. Brainstorming
VIII. Concrete next steps – now what? Or so what?
IX. Wrap-up – thank you for coming

Again, use the planning worksheet (found in Helpful Forms, Tab 7) to help you organize your thoughts.

Preparing yourself

In order for the workshop to be successful, you must prepare many things in advance. Here are some steps you should take:

1. After you have outlined the workshop using the planning worksheet, *make a script for yourself.* Include all the key points you want to make on each of the topics and all of your discussion questions. You can follow where the conversation leads, but you need to have a place to start from and you need to have back-up questions in case no one is talking.

2. *Plan your transitions from activity to activity and from topic to topic*. This is especially important to plan in advance because it is often the hardest part. Groups can get sidetracked at transitions or people might be confused about how a new topic relates to the last one.

3. *Make all handouts and visual aids.*

4. *Gather all of your materials.* (pens, paper, markers, tape, etc.)

5. *Make sure all technology works.*

The day of the workshop

Go to the room well before your workshop to make sure that it is set up how you want it. Also, test the technology again to be sure that it works.

At the workshop

- *Have people register*. This way you will know exactly who was there and will have contact information so that you can follow up with all workshop participants.

- *Give out nametags*. This way no one (especially not you) will be embarrassed because they can't remember someone's name.

- *Start with introductions*.
  - Introduce yourself. Your introduction should explain why you are qualified to lead this workshop. Point out anything important about the space – restrooms, refreshments, etc.

  - Then ask others to introduce themselves (unless there will be a huge number of people at the workshop). These introductions should include people's names and at least one other piece of information.

Helpful Hint: The piece of information that people give about themselves should be relevant either to the group or the workshop. Some ideas are: why they decided to come to the workshop, what they hope to get out of the workshop, or how they got involved with the group. While it might be interesting to you, the toothpaste people use is irrelevant unless this is a workshop on dental hygiene.

- Next, *tell participants what the goals of the workshop are*.
  "By the end of the evening you should all know how to contact your legislators and feel confident in your ability to do so."

- If it is a longer workshop, you should also *give participants a sense of how time will be used.*

"We'll start off by doing some activities that will get people up to speed on the background of this problem. After about an hour of that, we'll take a five-minute break. Then, we'll brainstorm some solutions to the problem. Then at the end we'll make a strategic plan. You should be out of here by five o'clock."

- *Establish a question policy*
  - If people should feel free to call out questions at any time, tell them that.
  - If you have a lot to cover and you want people to hold detail questions until the end, you can say that.
  - People need to know what to expect.

- *Get started!!*

- At the end, hand out any fact sheets that you have made.

- Finally, have some kind of *evaluation*. It can be through informal conversation or it can be a form that you pass out to all participants. This will help you gauge the effectiveness of the workshop and learn how to improve it for next time. A sample workshop evaluation form can be found in the Helpful Forms section (Tab 7).

MAKING A FACT SHEET

People rarely have time to research a topic and learn about it on their own. A short fact sheet can give a group member all the information he or she needs before meeting with an official or writing a letter.

Remember, a fact sheet should be short, usually no longer than one page, and should be tailored to your audience.

1. *Ask yourself the following questions:*
   a. For whom am I summarizing this information?
      - People with no background on the subject or people who have been immersed in it?
      - People who I'll never see again or people who can ask me questions?

   b. Why do they need it?
   c. Given those two answers, what are the most important things for them to know on this subject?

2. *Find out if anyone has done the condensing for you.* Don't reinvent the wheel! For example, the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) and the USDA websites have excellent summaries of the federal nutrition programs (see Resources, Tab 8). They also have "Frequently Asked Questions" sections about some of these programs.

   If you find a previously made summary of the information, you can either print it out as it is or you can cut and paste the information into a word document and credit your source. Once it is a word document, you can edit it to meet your group's needs

3. *If no one has done it for you*, gather the information listed in 1 c and write it in as few words as possible.

4. *In two sentences or less, write why this information is necessary.*
   - This can be how it connects to your goals: This is why we are advocating for this legislation.
   - Or what it is to be used for: Here is the background we need for our meeting on Tuesday.

5. *Put all of the information you have written in an order that makes sense.*

6. *Edit.*
   - Is everything that is written important? If not, take it out.
   - Is the wording clear?
   - Is it as concise as it can be while still being thorough?

7. *Put on the finishing touches.*
   - Proofread and make the document look visually appealing

INDIVIDUAL TRAINING

When to do an individual trainings

- When different leaders need work on different skills or need different information
- When leaders are not comfortable getting help in an area in front of one another
- When people cannot attend a group training session

Preparing for an individual training

Individual trainings don't need to be as formal as large workshops, but they still require advanced preparation.

Start by thinking about the leader with whom you'll be meeting. What are her strengths and weaknesses? What does she wish to learn about? What is her learning style?

Like a larger workshop, an individual training should have a goal. What should the person get out of your meeting?

Make sure you have all of the information the leader will need. Then, make a fact sheet that the leader can read and take with him.

It's usually best to be intentionally informal in individual trainings. Treat these trainings like a conversation. A good place to do an individualized training is at a coffee shop. The key is to make the leader feel as comfortable as possible in the training setting.

If the person has specifically requested information on a particular topic, you can begin the conversation by presenting them with some information on the topic. Encourage the person to ask questions. This way you can discuss the material.

If you're helping someone to understand a concept or make a connection, it is usually best to lead him through a series of questions. This way he can draw his own conclusions.

For Example

One leader had trouble getting the group to stay with the agenda when she facilitated meetings. She asked the group's organizer for help.

The organizer sat down with her and started a discussion using the following questions:

1. What makes people stray from an agenda? OR What takes up unnecessary time at meetings?

2. What are some ways that you could prevent people from talking about items not on the agenda? From spending too much time discussing details? Etc.

3. What do you think is a good way to close discussion on a particular topic?

(When the leader had no answer) Do you think it would work to summarize what people have said so far and state the conclusion that people have come to?

The leader and the organizer had a discussion around each of the questions. When the leader seemed to be having trouble, the organizer broke the question down further or threw out examples.

At the end, the organizer summarized all of the ideas that they had discussed giving the leader most of the credit for coming up with the ideas. This helped to build the leader's confidence.

She made sure that the leader had no more questions and then gave her a tip sheet on facilitating meetings that she had found on another group's website.

Key concepts

- Focus your questions on specific topics the person needs work on.
- Use questions to show a leader that he or she knows what to do; frame the questions so that they will be easy to answer.
- Throw out your own ideas in the form of questions.
- Leave printed information behind.
- Make sure the leader has no more questions or concerns when you're finished.
- Be positive.

Individual training is an ongoing process

- Training leaders as individuals is not just about having periodic meetings with them.
- At every meeting, ask leaders if there is any information they think they will need before the next meeting.
- If they don't ask for information and you think that they need it, make the question very specific. Would it help you to make this decision if you had more information about this subject?
- In regular conversations with leaders, give them information about the issues that the group is working on.
- Give them feedback on the skills that they're using.
- Debrief for a few minutes with a meeting facilitator.
- Work with leaders when they are learning a new task.
- Partner newer leaders with more experienced leaders so that the experienced leader can help the newer one.

Leaders should always be learning from you and from each other.

EXAMPLE OF A SKILL-BUILDING WORKSHOP

This sample workshop on citizen advocacy was held for a group of about 30 people. First, you will find an outline of the workshop with the approximate amount of time that each section takes. Next, there is a script for a facilitator. You can use the script to get ideas or word-for-word, as written. You can use the whole workshops or small sections of it, depending on your group's need.

All of the visual aids and handouts needed for the workshop are included at the end of this section. The visual aids and handouts are also on the disk in the front of the binder, so that you can customize them to your group's needs.

CITIZEN ADVOCACY WORKSHOP

Outline

I. Intro (5-10 min)
  A. Name and how you got involved in Voices Against Hunger (or your group's name)
  B. Goals of the workshop

II. Government 101 (10 min)

III. Calling public officials (25 min)
  A. Background
  B. Back-to-back practice

IV. Writing letters – family feud style (25 min)
  A. List of parts of letter covered, people call out ideas, uncover parts
  B. Break up into groups and write a letter using all of the parts
  C. Present letters to group, what makes them more or less effective?

V. Making a visit (20 min)
  A. Setting up your visit
  B. Do's and Don'ts video (Available from the Milwaukee Jewish Council at www.mjccr.org/advocacykit.html)
  C. How to follow-up

VI. When to do which action (5 min)

VII. Wrap-up (1 min)

WORKSHOP FACILITATOR'S SCRIPT

GOALS
To teach members how to bring their concerns to their public officials
To make members feel comfortable bringing their concerns to their public officials

MATERIALS
- Something large to write on (white board, black board, or butcher paper)
- Piece of poster board or transparency with parts of a phone call written on it
- Piece of poster board with parts of a letter written on it and a piece of paper to cover each part
- Lined paper
- Pens
- Name tags
- Flyer with websites and phone numbers for finding out who public officials are
- Flyers with information on current opportunities to use these skills

PROGRAM
(Spoken parts are in regular type. Unspoken instructions are in *italics*. Answers the group might give are usually in (parentheses).)

I. Introductions

Welcome members, tell them who you are, and ask them to say who they are and how they got involved with your group.

Go over the goals of the workshop

II. Government 101

I'm going to start with a little bit of background on how our government is set up and how policy change happens. First of all, we have several levels of government – city, county, state, and federal. In each of these levels there is an executive – mayor, county executive, governor, president – and a legislative body. In the city the people in the legislative body are aldermen, at the county level they are called county supervisors, at the state level are – state senators and assemblymen, and at the national level they are our senators and congress people. These people are all elected to represent those who live in their geographic area. The people that live in their area vote for them and are called their constituents.

The legislative body is in charge of making laws. To do this, they divide themselves into committees on different issues. Members of committees write bills, proposed laws on the issues on which they work. The whole committee must then vote to send the bill to the whole body. They vote on the bill and then send it to the executive. When the executive signs it, it becomes a law.

We can influence laws by influencing legislators and other public officials. Because we elect our representatives, they must answer to us. If we don't like what they do we can vote them out of office. Because of this, they want to hear what we, their constituents want.

What do you think are the voices that elected officials typically hear?
(Sample answers: special interest groups, PAC's (political action committees), the media, professional lobbyists)

Are any of these voices really the voice of the people? (People should say no)

Our elected officials welcome hearing from us. Studies show that they consider letters and phone calls from their constituents when they decide what position to take on important issues.

Every citizen has the right to voice their opinion to their public officials. People who are hired and paid to influence public officials are called lobbyists. There are rules about when and how often lobbyists can contact public officials. When individual citizens contact public officials, it's called advocacy. You are allowed to contact your own officials as often as you want.

Public officials hear from organizations and lobbyists all the time, but they don't often hear from ordinary citizens, the people they represent. Because public officials hear from ordinary citizens so rarely, real grassroots advocacy stands out and has more impact. Twenty letters or thirty phone calls can change a vote, especially on a local level where officials often have less than 1,000 constituents.

Advocacy by ordinary people is even more effective when we work together. If everyone who wanted to fight hunger took the time to tell his or her public officials that this should be a priority, we could really make a difference.

What are some things can we as individuals or as a group do to advocate our positions?

Write down what people say. Ideas should include:
(Letters
Phone calls
Visits
E-mails
Write letters to the editor
Testifying at a public hearing
Demonstrations/rallies)

If people miss items, you can ask questions like: What other ways might you communicate with someone? What if the official says no? How can we use the media?

I think we have a pretty good list here. Tonight, we're going to focus on some of the most common ways to contact your officials: how to make phone calls, write letters, and make visits to our public officials, and at the end we'll talk about when we should do the different activities on the list.

III. Calling Public Officials

How many people have ever called a public official about an issue?
Who did you actually speak to? (Most people will say a machine or an aide.)

So, knowing that you will be speaking to a message taker of some kind, what things should we keep in mind when deciding what to say? (Brief, clear, etc.) *If necessary, ask:* How long should you speak for? What should your tone be?

What should we include in our message?

Repeat back what people say in a way that is most clear and then write down their ideas. When people have named all of the important information, put up a poster or transparency with the information below and go over the phone call in order.

Show "Parts of a Phone Call" visual aid here (see pg 23 in the visual aids, in the back of this section or disk)

Now we're going to practice making phone calls.

We're going to role-play calling a particular public official about an issue that our group is working on.

Our situation is this: The state budget is being written and there is a proposal to add funding for more county workers. These are the people who evaluate and review food stamp cases. We're going to practice calling our legislators and asking them to support this proposal. We'll call it Amendment 117 of the proposed state budget. *Feel free to substitute your own phone call topic.*

Before we call our public official, we need to prepare, so everyone think of one reason that you think official X should oppose/support Y.
Have two or three people give you reasons.

Before we start practicing, we're going to do a sample phone call as a group. Who can demonstrate the "who you are" part? *Have someone demonstrate*. The "what you want" part? *Have someone demonstrate. Go through each of the five parts playing the part of the call recipient yourself.*

Now that we all know what to say, everyone, please find a partner to practice with. Because you can't see people who you're talking to on the phone, we're going to practice phone calls by sitting back-to-back. You should alternate being the official's secretary and the caller. Try to make two "phone calls" each. I'm going to give you about 10 minutes.

After 10 minutes or when people look done, bring the group back together and ask if there are any questions. Answer them and then move on to the next topic.

IV. Writing a Letter

Before the workshop, write the parts of a letter on a large piece of poster board (see visual aid on pg 24). Cover each item with its own piece of paper. Or you can use the enclosed visual aid and tape pieces of paper on your transparency. Another idea is to turn the parts into an animated PowerPoint slide. Reveal each main point individually and talk about it before revealing the next.

Now we're going to go over the parts of a letter. I have them all written here in the order that they go in a letter. I'm going to ask you to call out parts and when you get one, I'll uncover it. Think "Family Feud."
After all the items are mentioned, repeat back a synopsis of what the group has said in order to clarify the importance of each item.

What are some other things we should keep in mind when writing a letter?
Answers should include:
(Be brief and clear – only one issue per letter
Be polite
Personalize
Grammar and spelling is important)

If people are not thinking of answers ask questions like: How long should it be? What should the tone of the letter be? Etc.

Okay, now we're going to split into groups of four and practice writing letters.
Ask the groups to write a letter to a government official in your district about an issue that your group is working on.

Letter topic: We're going to write to the superintendent to encourage him to make the Summer Food Service Program a priority *(Substitute a letter topic important to your group)*

You can discuss main points of the letter as a big group or in individual groups depending on how knowledgeable people are on the letter topic

You have 10 minutes to write the letter. Feel free to ask me questions.

After the groups have been working for a couple of minutes walk around and make sure that everyone is on target. If people are off to a slow start, make an announcement at the five-minute mark that people should start writing if they haven't already. When there are about two minutes left, check with the groups to see if they're almost finished or there is a consensus that they need more time.

After the 10 minutes or at most 15 minutes:
Now, I'm going to ask each group to present its letter to the entire group.
After each group presents, ask: What is good about the letter? What could be improved?
When all the letters have been read, ask the group what made some of the letters more effective than others.

Wrap up:
Review – either quickly go over the parts of the letter and things to keep in mind your or have various members of the group do it.

Ask if there are any questions, then move on to the next topic.

V. Making a Visit

We've gone through phone calls and letters, so now we need to learn how to make a visit. What's the first thing you need to do when visiting someone you don't know well? (schedule it or make an appointment)

You can schedule a visit with a public official either by calling the official's office or writing a letter. These calls and letters can follow the same form as the letters and phone calls about an issue, but substitute meeting with the official for the "what you want" part.

To learn what to do when you're actually at a visit, I'm going to show you a video with different examples of a citizen visiting his public official. After each example, I'm going to stop the video and we'll talk about what he did well and what he could have done better.

Hang up a Do's paper and a Don'ts paper.
Show each section of the video. After each one ask:
What did he do well?
What mistakes did he make?
What did the congresswoman do to avoid being pinned down by the citizen advocate?
What could the advocate have done in response?
After the last section, is there anything else that one should do when visiting an official? (Answer: Make a one or two page handout with your issues and other information to leave with the official)

And what should you do after the visit?

(Answer: Write a thank you letter).

What do you think you should include in the letter?
(Answers: Thanks for your time
Summary of the issue(s)
List the commitments made by you and the official
The intention to continue the relationship
Names and addresses of people who attended)

What should you do after a visit if you go in a group? (Debrief)

Now read back what was written on the do's and don'ts pages.
It seems that many of these things come down to preparation. What can we do to prepare for a visit both as individuals and as a group?

Sample answers:
(Educate yourself
- Make sure that each person is educated on the issue and on the official
- Things to know about the official: voting record and statements on issue of interest; committee assignments; length of time in office

Make an agenda for the visit, keeping in mind that you'll probably only have about 20 minutes.
If you're going in a group, make sure that there is a spokesperson and that any other parts are assigned to particular people.
Make a one or two page handout detailing your issues and other information to leave with the official)

VI. When to take which action
Now that we have all of these tools *point to or re-display original list*, we need to know how to use them most effectively.
People we don't know well contact all of us all the time and ask us for things, to donate money, to volunteer, to join a group, etc. What method of contact is the hardest to say no to?
So, what do you think is the most effective way to get an officials support? (a visit)
How can we use some of the other techniques to prepare the way for a commitment at a visit? (send letters, emails, and make phone calls before a visit)
What if the official seems positive but won't make a commitment at the visit? (letters, phone calls, e-mails between visit and follow-up)
What if the official says no? (demonstrations, rallies, letters to the editor)

We also have to think about timing when deciding what technique to use. If the vote is tomorrow, what should we do? If the legislation is still being drafted?

Any questions?

VII. Wrap-up
Announce opportunities to use these new skills
Thanks for coming
If there are non-members in the room, ask them to join.

VISUAL AIDS

Parts of a phone call

- Who you are – name, address, affiliation, that you are a constituent
- What you want – specific issue, preferably with bill name and number
- Why you want it - why you support or oppose that legislation including how it affects you personally as a constituent
- Ask where the legislator stands on the issue
- Thank the person for his/her time

Parts of a letter

- Salutation with correct title

- What you want – include bill name and/or number or specific issue

- Who you are – that you're a constituent and your relationship to the issue

- Why the official should do what you want – no more than 3 points; include how it affects you and other constituents

- Ask the official to specifically commit to supporting or opposing the proposal

- Thank you

- Signature with home address (in district) and other contact information

HANDOUTS

HELPFUL HINTS FOR…

TELEPHONE CALLS

- Be concise – keep your call to 2-3 minutes.
- Be organized. Write out two or three points you want to make beforehand. Be prepared to keep it brief.
- Practice what you will say.
- If you cannot reach the legislator, ask to speak to the aide responsible for your issue. Do not be disappointed with this.
- Clearly state whether you are requesting support or opposition to a specific bill.
- Thank them for their time.
- Follow up with a letter restating your points and thanking them for their time.

LETTER WRITING

- Be brief (one page or less), and use your own words.
- Begin with the appropriate heading and address.
- Be specific: State the specific bill number and issue, and state your opinion in the first sentence.
- Relate your experience with the issue. Use personal examples. Your interest and concern about the issue is what counts, not your expertise.
- Ask the legislator to specifically commit to supporting or opposing the legislation you are writing about. Ask for specific reasons they are supporting or opposing the proposal.
- If you are sending a letter to a committee member who is not your legislator, always send a copy to your own representatives.
- Sign and print your name and include your address.
- If you have pertinent materials and/or editorials from local papers, include them.

E-MAIL

- An e-mail sent to a legislator should be considered a professional letter, follow above guidelines concerning letter writing.
- Be sure to include your full name and address in the body of the message

HELPFUL HINTS FOR…

PERSONAL VISITS

- Have three or four key points in mind. Write them out beforehand.
- Research your legislator's positions on your issues, and consider these in framing your arguments.
- Be on time. If you cannot avoid being late, call the office to alert them.
- Dress professionally. Your appearance is important.
- Have and agenda prepared.
- Be brief. You can expect 15-20 minutes.
- Be sure to get your concerns on the table before engaging in small talk.
- Send a follow-up letter. Restate your message and thank your legislator for his/her time.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- Do your homework. Understand the bill or issue, the status of the bill, and the impact on you and your community.
- Write out your statement in direct, easy to understand language. Have enough typed copies for committee members and a few extra copies for others who are interested.
- Dress professionally – your appearance may be as important to some legislators as what you say or how you say it.
- Begin your testimony by greeting the chair and committee members. ("Good afternoon Senator Smith and members of the committee…") Introduce yourself and, if appropriate, your organization or group.
- Begin with a clear and concise statement of your position and what you want. "I am opposed to (in favor of) this bill and urge your vote against (for) it."
- Be brief – plan to speak 3-5 minutes.
- Speak clearly and directly. Remain courteous and do not argue with committee members or members of the audience.
- Powerful testimony is a combination of personal stories and accurate, current statistics. Speak from your heart.
- Follow-up on the bill's progress. Contact legislators personally, or write a follow-up letter.
- After your testimony, ask for questions. Don't be afraid to say you do not know an answer. If other members of your group can provide answers that you don't know, point them out to the committee. Write down questions you do not know, and tell committee members you will get back to them with a response. Send the response to the chair.

HOW TO FIND YOUR PUBLIC OFFICIALS

On the web:

City of Milwaukee Website – *http://itmdapps.ci.mil.wi.us/electedreps/electrep.jsp*
If you put in your address, it gives you the names of all of your elected officials

State Legislature Website – *http://www.legis.state.wi.us/waml*

Project Vote Smart – *http://www.vote-smart.org*
Gives the names, contact information, and bio of state and federal officials

By phone:

Office of the Common Council – 414-286-2221
Tell the person your address and ask to speak with your alderperson

County Board of Supervisors – receptionist 414-278-4222
Tell the person your address and ask to speak with your Supervisor

City of Milwaukee Election Commission – 414-286-3491

Milwaukee County Election Commission – 414-278-4060

State Legislative Hotline – 1-800-362-9472

Ask your state representative for a "Blue Book" so that you can have all of this information at your fingertips

Some important contact information:

MPS Superintendent:
William G. Andrekopoulos,
Office of the Superintendent, Milwaukee Public Schools
5225 W. Vliet St.
Milwaukee, WI 53208

County Executive – 414-278-4211
Scott Walker
901 N. 9th Street
Courthouse, Room 308
Milwaukee, WI 53233-1458

VOICES AGAINST HUNGER
A group organized by Hunger Task Force

EXAMPLE OF A KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

This is a workshop on the Food Stamp Program that was run for a group of about 25 people. First, you will find an outline of the workshop with the approximate amount of time that each section takes. Next, there is a script for a facilitator. You can use the script to get ideas or word-for-word, as written. You can use the whole workshop or small sections of it, depending on your group's need. You can also use this as a guide to leading a workshop and tailor the information to your specific topic.

All of the visual aids and handouts needed for the workshop are included at the end of this section. The visual aids and handouts are also on the enclosed disk, so that you can customize them to your group's needs.

FOOD STAMP WORKSHOP

Outline

I. Welcome and Intro (5 min)
- A. Thanks for coming
- B. Names
- C. Goals
- D. Questions and staying on topic

II. Basic Background (5 min)
- A. What is the purpose of food stamps?
- B. How do they work?
- C. How are they paid for? (basic)

III. Who is eligible and how do they apply? (45 min)
- A. Role play – filling out an application
- B. Go over eligibility chart
- C. Debrief - What we learned from the role play

IV. Voices goals (overhead) (1 min)

V. Introduce "players" (1 min)

VI. Customer Service (10 min)
- A. Member talks about her bad customer service experience
- B. Other problems
- C. What are some solutions – brainstorming
- D. How can we advance these – more brainstorming

VII. County Workers (30 min)
- A. How the budget works
- B. What are the problems with this?
- C. What can/should we do to get money we need?

VIII. 12th/Vliet Move (5 min)
- A. What should the move look like?
- B. What can our role be in making that happen smoothly?

IX. Deductions (10 min)
- A. A review (overhead and handout)
- B. How can we make people more aware of them
- C. What are our next steps on both of those questions

X. Wrap-up (county meeting invitation, group's goals) (5 min)
- A. Go over solutions discussed
- B. Announce immediate next steps – Upcoming county meeting, group's introductory meeting with head of DHHS
- A. Ask people in the room to become part of the group's Food Stamp work group

WORKSHOP FACILITATOR'S SCRIPT

(Spoken parts are in regular type. Unspoken instructions are in *italics*. Answers the group might give are usually in (parentheses).)

I. Welcome and Intro

A. Thanks for coming

B. Names

C. The goals of this workshop are:

- To give you background on what food stamps are, their purpose, and who is eligible for them.
- To give you background on how food stamps work in Milwaukee County, specifically
- To give you an in-depth understanding of the issues that Voices Against Hunger has chosen to work on
- To open the discussion on how we can solve these problems

D. Feel free to ask questions if something is unclear, but we have a lot to cover, so please make sure that your question is on topic. If you have a really detailed question, you can ask me after the workshop.

II. Basic Background

A. The goal of the Food Stamp Program as stated by the USDA is to alleviate hunger and malnutrition by permitting low-income households to obtain a more nutritious diet through normal channels of trade.

B. State and local welfare agencies administer the program, under guidance established by Congress and the USDA. In order for a person in Wisconsin to get food stamps, he or she must apply at a county office. If you qualify for food stamps, you are sent a Quest card, which looks like this *pass around*. The card works like a debit card. A certain amount of food stamp money is put on the card at the beginning of each month. You can use the card in the credit card machine at stores to buy food items only. You cannot use it to buy toiletries, pet food, or prepared food.

C. 100% of food stamp benefits are paid for by the federal government. The Food Stamp Program is an entitlement program. This means that the program is available nationwide to all those who need it and meet eligibility standards. There is no limit to the number of people who can receive food stamps in a year. Everyone who applies and is qualified receives benefits paid for by the federal government. There are also administrative costs associated with this program. Administrative costs are paid for half by the state government and half by the federal government. This money is then distributed among the counties in Wisconsin. The counties administer the program.

D. Since May, the main place to apply for food stamps in Milwaukee County has been 111 W. Pleasant St. This is only a temporary location, however. For the past 5 years, people could go to the regional W-2 offices to apply for food stamps, but due to some disagreements over rents, the county moved the food stamp workers out of the W-2 offices into 111 W. Pleasant. At the same time, they are renovating the old welfare office on 12th and Vliet. Workers will be moving to that office in spring or summer of this year.

III. Who is eligible and how do they apply?
In order to learn about how you go about applying for food stamps and who is eligible, we're going to do a role-play.

See role play instructions and materials in the back of this section (pg 35)

IV. Voices Goals
Show and read "Goals" overhead (in visual aids section, pg 45, and on disk).

V. Players
In order to achieve these goals, we need to know who has power over these programs.
Give names and titles of these people on regional/state/local levels
At the most immediate level are economic support specialists who determine eligibility for food stamps, Medicaid, and childcare.

VI. Customer Service

A. *A member talks about a bad experience with customer service (make sure to ask the member first and have the person tell you over the phone about the ONE experience he or she will discuss).*
B. In addition to the problem that [name] just told us about, there are many other customer service problems at the Food Stamp office. *Mention whatever the member has not: Phone system, navigating the office, poor explanation of the process, little sensitivity to the situation that the applicants are in.*
C. What are some solutions to these problems?
D. What can we do to advance these solutions? *Follow up questions might be:* Whom do we need to talk to? What would make them do this?

VII. County Workers

A. In order to understand the county worker cuts, we have to understand how the food stamp budget works.

   The cost of food stamps is divided into two parts: benefits and administration. The benefits that people receive are paid for entirely by the federal government. Food Stamps are an entitlement program. This means that the federal government must pay for benefits for whomever is eligible. There is no limit to the number of people who can receive food stamps.

In addition to paying for benefits, there are many costs associated with running the Food Stamp Program. These include things like eligibility workers, office space, and phone systems. These costs fall under the administrative part of the budget.

The state and federal government each pay for half of the administrative costs for food stamps, which basically translates into the federal government matching up to a certain amount what the state government invests in the program. So when the state cuts $10 million from the program, the program actually loses $20 million because it loses federal funding as well.

In Wisconsin the food stamp administration money is divided among the counties using a model called station staffing. Every county gets enough money for one eligibility worker and a half-time supervisor/administration person. Then, the state figures out what percentage of the state's cases each county has. The money that is left over after each county is given its worker is then divided amongst all counties that have more than 400 cases based on the percentage of cases that they have. So, Milwaukee County, which has approximately 40% of the cases, gets about 40% of the remaining money. This somehow translates into the county getting about 30% of the state food stamp administration money.

For the next budget cycle, the state wants to switch from using percentage of caseload to using percentage of workload to distribute the administrative money. They've done some pretty complicated calculations as to how much time each task takes a worker to complete and what tasks are associated with which cases. From this, the state will determine what percentage of the workload each county has and divide the money accordingly.

In order to save money, the state is in the process of putting into place certain timesaving measures like simplified reporting for food stamps. They have calculated the number of minutes that each of these measures will save over the course of a year, and are eliminating the number of county workers based on the number of work minutes that are saved.

B. *A discussion about what people think of this plan…*What's good about this plan? (will simplify some things for clients, too) What hasn't been taken into consideration? (workers taking breaks, people calling their workers to ask questions, etc). Given our discussion about customer service, do we think that cutting workers is a good idea?

C. What can/should we do to make sure that Milwaukee County gets the money it needs?

VIII. 12th/Vliet Move

A. The next goal on our list is to make sure that the move to 12th/Vliet runs smoothly. What do you think the move should look like? What do they need to do to prepare for the move? Is there anything that needs to be considered after the move?

B. What should our role be in making sure that all of this happens? Who do we need to talk to? What do we need to do?

IX. Deductions

A. Here is a list of the deductions we talked about during the role-play. *Put up transparency or poster with the list.*

B. Our goal is to make people more aware of them. How can we make that happen? *Either draw a line down the center of your chalkboard or dry erase board, or hang two pieces of paper.* On this piece of paper I'm going to write down everything we think the county should do to make people more aware and on this piece of paper I'm going to write down the kinds of outreach we think that we should do. Who has an idea?
(The idea behind this is to make sure people understand that there is a difference between the group's role and the County's role)

X. Wrap-up

A. *Read or have someone else read some of the major solutions on each piece of paper. Then go over the action steps that have been discussed.*

B. We can start advancing these solutions by going to the county meeting next week. Also, it seems like the person we need to talk to about many of these things is the director of DHHS. Who wants to write a letter asking her to meet with us? *If there's time, ask the group what they think should be included in the letter. If not say,* Great! After this, let's set a time to talk about the letter.

C. We're putting together/we have a food stamp work group that's focusing on making happen all of the things we just discussed. They'll be doing some formal strategizing, meeting with public officials, etc. Who wants to be part of this work group? *Write down the names of the people who raise their hands.*

D. Thank you for coming!!

ROLE-PLAY MATERIALS

ROLE PLAY

This is the role-play that is referenced in section III ("Who is eligible and how do they apply", pg 32) of the Food Stamp Workshop.

Set-up

1. There is a complete copy of the Wisconsin Food Stamp application in the back of this section. It takes a long time to fill out, so you should remove sections based on the specific areas that you and your group are interested in. Then take out the "worker instructions" on those sections.

2. Make enough copies of the shortened application for half of your group.

3. Make enough copies of the county worker instructions for half of your group.

4. On orange paper, make enough copies of the "checklist of items…" (pg 41) for half of your group.

5. Photocopy the customer identities on color-coded paper (Pinkerton goes on pink, McYellow goes on yellow, etc.). There should be enough customer identities for half of the group. Try to make approximately the same number for each character.

6. Split group in half (worker/client)

7. Give clients color-coded character descriptions. Try to make the distribution of colors fairly even. Tell the clients to read their identity and wait for a worker to call them over.

8. Give workers Food Stamp Applications (shortened) detailed instruction sheets, and deduction forms photocopied on orange paper.

9. Show them how the application form works. (Point out that there are many questions in one section.)

10. Tell the workers that when they are ready they should call a client over to sit next to them.

They fill out applications

Debrief -

Go over eligibility chart (found in visual aids in this section (pg 43) and on the disk)

Go over formula (found in visual aids in this section (pg 44) and on the disk)

Go over each of the four characters by having someone with each identity tell the group about the character. Then ask:

- Who is eligible, why and why not?
- What do you think about that? Fair? Unfair?
- What did people who were clients think of the application? Easy? Hard? The proof?

- What was it like to be a worker?
- What's good about this system?
- What should be changed?

Client Identities for Food Stamp Role Play

J. McYellow
You are an elderly person living alone. You are retired. You receive social security benefits in the amount of $700 per month. You own your house, so you have no rent or mortgage payments.
Utilities cost $200 per month in your house
You have $1,000 in your checking account, $250 in your savings account, and various bonds and retirement accounts worth about $1,000
You pay $300 per month for your various prescriptions

R. Blueson
You and your spouse each have minimum wage jobs making $5.25/hour. You are a cashier at John's Market and your spouse cleans at the Pumpkin Building. This means that you have a monthly income of $1,820 (before taxes).
You have a 7 year-old girl and an 11 year-old boy.
You currently have $100 in your checking account. You have no other assets.
You spend $800 per month in childcare to Growing Kids Child Care Center
You pay $600 per month for rent
You pay $100 per month for your utilities
You pay $30 per month for your phone

D. Pinkerton
You are a single adult who was laid off 2 months ago from your job at Smooth Run Automotive. You receive $800 per month in unemployment benefits.
You have $50 in your savings account, $100 in your checking account, and an IRA from your job worth $2,000.
You pay $500 per month in rent in your small 1-bedroom apartment
Your utilities cost about $80
You pay $200 per month for medical insurance
Your phone bill is about $30 per month

G. Lavender
You are the single parent of a 3 year-old boy. You are an administrative assistant at the Lighthouse Insurance Company. You make $8 per hour or $1,400 per month (before taxes).
You have a checking account with $50 in it and no other assets.
You pay $500 per month in rent for your apartment
Your utilities cost about $100 per month
Your phone bill is about $40 per month
You pay $500 per month for childcare to Healthy Kids Family Daycare
You have Diabetes, so you pay $50 per month for medication in addition to what insurance covers

County Worker Instructions for the Food Stamp Workshop Role Play

You are a county economic support specialist. You evaluate food stamp, medical assistance, and childcare assistance cases.

A client applying for food stamps will approach you with a completed registration form. Flip through it but don't really pay attention to the answers. (You will be asking all of those questions again.)

Page 1 – Start with section III - Ask the client his or her name. Then ask for proof of the client's address. Tell them it can be a driver's license or any envelope sent to their house. If they cannot show you this proof, circle the item on the proof checklist (orange paper).

Page 2 – Section IV - Ask how many adults and how many children are in the client's household. You should show the client the information that is needed about each member of the household, but there is no need to fill in that section for our purposes.

Section V – Ask if there is anyone in the household age 18-49 who is attending school. The answer will be no.

Page 3 – Section VI – Ask each of these questions. The answers will be no in all cases.

Section VII – ignore this section

Page 4 – Section VIII – Assume the client has no cash. Ask if she has a checking account, what its current value is, and what the account number is. If she does not have the account number (which she won't), write "checking account number" on the bottom of the orange paper. Ask the same questions about savings account and other assets as listed on the application form.

Section IX – Ask who in the family is employed and what the employer's name is. Ask how many hours per week they work and how much they make per hour. Then ask for each person's monthly earnings. Ask for proof of income. If the client cannot provide it, circle "Proof of monthly income" on the orange form

Section X – Only applies if your client is D. Pinkerton. Ask the questions as written on the form.

Page 5 – Section XI – Ask the client if s/he receives any of the types of income listed in this section. If so, ask how much. J. McYellow receives Social Security and D. Pinkerton receives Unemployment. No one else has any unearned income

Section XII – Ask expense questions as written. Assume that all of these expenses are paid monthly

Page 6 – Section XIII – Have the client initial each statement and sign the bottom.

<u>After the application is complete</u>, if your client is:
J. McYellow or **R. Blueson**, tell him/her that s/he is eligible for food stamps. S/he will receive a letter in the mail in the next week telling him/her how much s/he will receive.
D. Pinkerton, tell him/her that s/he is not eligible because s/he has more than $2,000 in assets
G. Lavender, tell him/her that s/he is not eligible because s/he makes too much money

Checklist of Items Needed to Prove Eligibility for Food Stamp Benefits

❑ Proof of identity, such as a birth certificate or a baptismal certificate.

❑ Proof of your residence, such as your lease, a driver's license, a rent receipt or a utility bill.

❑ Social Security Number (SSN) for everyone who has a SSN and is applying for food stamp benefits.

❑ Proof of immigration status of non-citizens for all household members applying for food stamp benefits.

❑ Proof of monthly income of household members, for example:
• Paycheck stubs for the last 30 days.
• Most recent tax return if you or someone in your household is self employed.
• Benefit letters from the Social Security Administration, Veteran's Administration, etc.
• Unemployment Insurance check stubs.
• Pension information.

❑ Proof of monthly out-of-pocket childcare expense.

❑ Proof of monthly shelter costs, including:
• Rent receipts or mortgage payment book.
• Homeowner's insurance bills.
• Proof of property taxes.
• Proof of fuel and utility costs.

❑ Proof of monthly out of pocket medical expenses of those who are:
• Age 60 or over;
• Disabled and receive Social Security disability benefits;
• Disabled veterans;

VISUAL AIDS

FOOD STAMP ELIGIBILITY

	Monthly Amounts		
Number in Household	**Gross Income Test**	**Maximum Net Income**	**Maximum Benefit Allotment**
1	$ 973	$ 749	$ 141
2	1,313	1,010	259
3	1,654	1,272	371
4	1,994	1,534	471
5	2,334	1,795	560
6	2,674	2,057	672
7	2,014	2,319	743
8	3,354	2,580	849
Each additional person	+ 341	+ 262	+ 106

Effective October 2003

THE FORMULA

Gross Income Computation	Example
Determine household size.....	4 people with no elderly or disabled members.
Add gross monthly income...	$800 earned income + $214 social security = $1,014 gross income.
If gross monthly income is less than the limit for household size, determine net income.	$1,014 is less than the $1,994 allowed for a 4-person household, so determine net income.

Subtract Deductions to Determine Net Income and Apply the Net Income Test	Example
Subtract 20% earned income deduction..........	
Subtract standard deduction.........	$1,014 gross income $800 earned income x 20% = $160. $1,014 - $160 = $854
Subtract dependent care deduction, but not more than limit.....	
Subtract child support deduction......	$854 - $134 = $720
Subtract medical costs over $35 for elderly and disabled.........	$720 - $116 = $604
Excess shelter deduction........ Determine half of adjusted income....... Determine if shelter costs are more than half of adjusted income........ Subtract excess amount, but not more than the limit, from adjusted income........	0
Apply the net income test....	$604 adjusted income/2 = $302 $350 total shelter - $302 (half of income) = $48 excess shelter cost $604 - $48 = $556 Net monthly income Since the net monthly income is less than $1,534 allowed for a household of 4, the household has met the income test.

Benefit Computation	Example
Multiply net income by 30%... (Round up)	$556 net monthly income x .3 = $166.80 (round up to $167)
Subtract 30% of net income from the maximum allotment for the household size...	$471 maximum allotment for 4 - $167 (30% of net income) = $304**, Food Stamp Allotment** for a full month

If a household applies after the first day of the month, benefits will be provided from the day the household applies.

Source: USDA, January 2004

Goals:

- Increase participation to *all* eligible persons

- Ensure recipients receive *all* possible program benefits

Steps the group will take to reach these goals:

- Improve customer service: phone system, waiting lines, etc. – improves continued access to program

- Get adequate dollars from state and federal government into FS program – to staff more and better caseworkers

- Monitor move back to 12th/Vliet – better customer service = better access

- Make recipients aware of deductions – can increase benefits

HANDOUTS

First Issue Campaigns
Announced Oct. 30, 2003

Issue #1: Summer Feeding

Situation:

- Summer Feeding sites provide a meal to children who may not otherwise get one
- Only 17% of eligible Milwaukee County children were served (2002)
- Sites closed down weeks before summer ended
- $23 million in possible federal funding went untapped because all eligible children were not served (2002)

Goals:

- Serve more children
- Keep sites open every week during the summer

Steps the group will take to reach these goals:

- Get MPS to take leadership – they have the infrastructure and the expertise, as well as access to children and parents
- Seamless waiver – increased reimbursement for meals provided; easier paperwork for providers and parents; makes it easier to serve more children
- Optimize Summer Feeding Sites – more/better locations, longer service weeks, will feed more children

Issue #2: Food Stamps

Situation:

- Only half of eligible Wisconsin residents receive food stamps
- Many applicants experience poor customer service
- 1/3 of food stamp recipients receive just $10 per month
- State and County budget cuts will eliminate 60+ eligibility workers

Goals:

- Increase participation to *all* eligible persons
- Ensure recipients receive *all* possible program benefits

Steps the group will take to reach these goals:

- Get adequate dollars from state and federal government into FS program – to staff more and better caseworkers
- Improve customer service: phone system, waiting lines, etc. – improves continued access to program
- Monitor move back to 12th/Vliet – better customer service = better access
- Make recipients aware of deductions – can increase benefits

Example of a Recruitment Workshop

A recruitment workshop can be used to educate people who are unfamiliar with the issues that a group is working on. The idea is to inspire people to act by bringing problems to their attention. A simulation is an excellent way to inspire people because it lets them feel the frustration, anger, or sadness that has led your group to focus on this issue.

This simulation is an expansion of the role-play exercise in the Food Stamp Workshop (Tab 5). Feel free to use this simulation as it is written or adapt it to the needs of your group. You can also use it as a template for a simulation on a different issue.

Please note that some of the materials for this simulation are in the Role-Play Materials (pg 35) section of the Food Stamp Workshop (Tab 5)

FOOD STAMP APPLICATION SIMULATION

Materials
Food stamp application
County worker instructions
Client identities
Eligibility checklist
Eligibility chart transparency
Formula transparency
All of the above can be found in Tab 5 in the Role-Play Materials section (pg 35)

Food stamp application registration
Client ID cards
Food stamp background handout
The above can be found at the end of this section (pg 51)

Pens
Envelopes

Set-up
Split the room into waiting room and office.

In the waiting area, there should be a table or desk for a receptionist with room for a line near it and chairs for waiting.

In the office, there should be pairs of chairs preferably with a writing surface for each pair.

If possible, assign roles outside the room where the simulation will take place.

Assigning Roles
Assign one person to be the receptionist and assign a little less than half the group to be workers so that there are two extra clients. If there are an odd number of people, you can have either one or three extra clients.

Send the receptionist to the reception desk and the workers to the office. Give them their instructions

Give each client an envelope with his or her identity and some of their documentation.

The simulation
Tell the clients to get in line at receptionist to receive intake forms, fill out forms then stand in line again to hand intake forms to receptionist. Receptionist should give forms that match color of character description. People can use their own names.

During this time, workers are "trained." Walk through the application with the workers. Make sure they understand what they are supposed to do in each part. Tell them they should try to move as quickly as possible because there will be people waiting.

When workers are trained, hand them intake forms and have them call their clients one at a time. Then send their clients back out to the "waiting room" with a preliminary answer based on color of form. They may call one of the extra people at this time. They will not have time to finish with a second person.

When each of the workers has finished with one client, begin the discussion.

Discussion
Display the eligibility chart (found on pg 43 and on the disk).

Walk them through the formula for one of the four characters (The formula is found on pg 44 and on the disk).

Redisplay eligibility chart.

Go over each of the four characters (read them if you have time)
- Who is eligible, why and why not
- What do you think about that? Fair? unfair?

What did clients think of the application?
Easy? Hard?
The proof?

What was it like to be a worker?

What's good about this system? What should be changed?

What can we do about changing it?

Wrap-up
Talk to people about what Voices is doing to make things better, and how they can be involved.

Thank you for coming

MATERIALS

Identification Card

Identification Card

Identification Card

Identification Card

HANDOUTS

Food Stamp Background

History/Purpose

The Food Stamp Program provides a basic safety net to millions of people. The idea for the program was born in the late 1930s, with a limited program in effect from 1939 to 1943. It was revived as a pilot program in 1961 and was extended nationwide in 1974. The current program structure was implemented in 1977 with a goal of alleviating hunger and malnutrition by permitting low-income households to obtain a more nutritious diet through normal channels of trade.

Benefits/Participation

The program provides monthly coupons to eligible low-income families who can use them to purchase food. However, electronic benefit transfer systems (EBT) are quickly replacing the use of coupons. EBT replaces paper coupons through use of a benefits card, similar to a bank card. USDA reports that all 50 states, DC, and Puerto Rico are now using EBT systems in some form.

The average monthly participation level in fiscal year (FY) 2002 was 19 million individuals. One of the strengths of the Food Stamp Program is its ability to respond to local, state, and national economic changes and emergencies.

The Food Stamp Program is targeted toward those most in need. Of all food stamp households in FY 2002 (the year for which most recent USDA data are available), 54.1 percent contain children; households with children receive 79.4 percent of all food stamp benefits. 18.8 percent of food stamp households contain an elderly person and 27 percent contain a disabled person. Approximately 88 percent of food stamp households have gross incomes below the poverty line ($18,100 for a family of four in 2002). Approximately thirty-six percent of food stamp households have gross incomes below half of the poverty line.

The length of participation in the Food Stamp Program is less than two years for 71% of those receiving food stamps. Half of all new recipients stay on the program no more than six months, and 57% end participation within one year. Receiving food stamps increases the nutritional value of a low-income household's home food supplies by 20 to 40 percent. Food Stamp households participating in the program on average spend more on food and acquire more food than low-income non-participating households.

Eligibility

Eligibility for the Food Stamp Program is based on financial and non-financial factors. The application process includes completing and filing an application form, being interviewed, and verifying facts crucial to determining eligibility. With certain exceptions, a household that meets the eligibility requirements is qualified to receive benefits. Most legal immigrants who were in the United States as of August 22, 1996 and who are children, elderly, or disabled can get food stamps. All undocumented immigrants and many legal immigrants are ineligible for food stamp benefits. Also, many ablebodied, childless, unemployed adults have time limits on their receipt of food stamp benefits.

A household is defined as a person or a group of people living together, but not necessarily related, who purchase and prepare food together. Households, except those with elderly or disabled members, must have gross incomes below 130 percent of the poverty line. All households must have net incomes below 100 percent of poverty to be eligible. Most households may have up to $2,000 in countable resources (e.g., checking/savings account, cash, stocks/bonds). Households with at least one household member who is disabled or age 60 or older may have up to $3,000 in resources. Currently, program benefits provide an average of about 78 cents a meal per person.

Funding
The federal government pays 100 percent of food stamp program benefits. Federal and State governments each cover 50 percent of administrative costs. In FY 2002, total federal food stamp costs were $18.2 billion.

Who runs the program and how much does it cost?
State and local welfare agencies actually administer the Food Stamp Program, under guidance and standards established by Congress and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).
The Federal Government pays most of the cost of the Food Stamp Program. In Fiscal Year 2002, over $18.2 billion was paid out in food stamp benefits. State and local governments pay half of the program's administrative costs. Ninety percent of federal food stamp dollars are allocated directly for benefits.

What is the average food stamp benefit?
A food stamp recipient receives only 78 cents per meal, on average. According to America's Second Harvest (2001), 84 percent of their clients' food stamps last for three weeks or less.

Can food stamp recipients purchase anything they want with their coupons?
Food stamps can only be used to buy food, beverages, and food-producing seeds or plants. The coupons cannot be used to buy alcohol, tobacco, pet food, soap, toothpaste, toilet paper, non-prescription drugs or any other non-food item, regardless of how essential it might be.

Do poor people use their food stamps wisely?
Households participating in the Food Stamp Program, on average, buy more food than low-income households who don't participate in the program. In addition, food stamp shoppers obtain more nutrients for every dollar they spend on food than other shoppers.

From The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC)

Workshop Planning Worksheet

Objective(s):

Participants:

Room considerations:

Outline: (including topic, time allotted, and activity)

Materials: (including handouts and visual aids)

WORKSHOP SIGN-IN SHEET

Activity ____________________ Group ____________________ Date ____________________ Staff ____________________

Name	Address	Phone	E-mail
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			
16.			
17.			
18.			

Training Evaluation

1. Use the following scale to rate how valuable you found today's session:

(high) 5 4 3 2 1 (low)

2. Please rate the quality of the material presented today:

(high) 5 4 3 2 1 (low)

3. Please rate the communication effectiveness of the instructor:

(high) 5 4 3 2 1 (low)

4. Please rate the quality of visual aids and materials:

(high) 5 4 3 2 1 (low)

5. Please rate the effectiveness of the program in enhancing your understanding of the particular hunger or advocacy issue:

(high) 5 4 3 2 1 (low)

6. How was the speed of the program? too fast just right too slow

How will you be able to apply what you've learned today?

Which activities were most helpful?

Which activities were least helpful?

Would you come to another workshop at Hunger Task Force? yes no

Would you be interested in obtaining more information about Voices Against Hunger? If so, please provide your contact information and we will be in touch with you.

Name ______________________________

Address ______________________________

Phone ______________________________

Email ______________________________

For more information about upcoming programs, please contact our Community Educator at 414-777-0483 or shelly@hungertaskforce.org

VOICES AGAINST HUNGER
A group organized by Hunger Task Force

ACTION ALERT

DATE:	**Today's Date**
ACTION NEEDED:	This is where you tell them what they need to do
DEADLINE:	Act by this date (and why – i.e. before a hearing, vote, etc.)
BACKGROUND:	Two-three paragraphs about why this is important, other facts, history, important things to know….basic background info. Two-three paragraphs about why this is important, other facts, history, important things to know….basic background info. Two-three paragraphs about why this is important, other facts, history, important things to know….basic background info. Two-three paragraphs about why this is important, other facts, history, important things to know….basic background info.
CONTACT:	This is the name, address, and phone of the person whom you wish for them to contact
WHAT TO SAY:	Either give them a sample script or letter. If needed, they can download a letter from your e-mail or our website
OTHER RESOURCES:	Web addresses, etc. where they can get more info

For more information on this action, please contact Heather Dummer Combs via phone at 414-777-0483 or via e-mail at heather@hungertaskforce.org

LEADER TRACKING CHART

Leader's Name	Strengths	Weaknesses	Topics to work on	Next Contact	Best way to contact	Other information

RESOURCES

Hunger

Food Research and Action Center (FRAC): www.frac.org

USDA's Food Nutrition Service (FNS): http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/

Hunger Task Force: www.hungertaskforce.org

Community Organizing

Midwest Academy. (2001). *Organizing for Social Change, 4th ed.* Santa Ana, CA: Seven Locks Press.

Kahn, Si. (1999). *Organizing: A Guide for Grassroots Leaders*. Washington, DC: National Association of Social Workers.

www.virginia-organizing.org (Virginia Organizing Project)

www.grass-roots.org

Citizen Advocacy

www.virginia-organizing.org (Virginia Organizing Project)

www.aclu.org (American Civil Liberties Union)

www.mjccr.org (Milwaukee Jewish Council on Community Relations)

Planning and Facilitating Meetings

Biagi, Robert C. (1978). *Working Together: A Manual for Helping Groups Work More Effectively*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts.

Doyle, Michael and Straus, David. (1993). *How to Make Meetings Work: The New Interaction Method.* New York: Berkley Publishing Group.

www.virginia-organizing.org

Designing and Leading Workshops

Silberman, Mel. (1998). *Active Training*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Pfeiffer.

Dale, Duane; Miller, Robert; and Magnani, D. (1979). *Beyond Experts: A Guide for Citizen Group Training*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts.