FreshLink Ambassador Model: Connecting Residents to Resources to Improve Community Health
FreshLink Ambassador Model in Virginia

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Acknowledgements

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Objectives

By the end of this presentation, participants will be able to:

• Describe the components of the FreshLink Ambassador Model.

• Describe the impact of the program on potential shoppers, ambassadors, markets and communities.

• Locate tools and resources to further their understanding of how to implement the model.
Glossary of Terms

- **PRCHN**: Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods at Case Western Reserve University.
- **FLA**: FreshLink Ambassador(s)
- **SNAP**: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- **SNAP Incentives**: incentives provided to SNAP recipients at the point-of-sale to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables
- **Produce Perks**: Ohio local incentive provides a dollar to dollar match up $20 to spend on produce when farmers’ market shoppers use their SNAP at the farmers’ market
- **FM Tracks**: iOS application and web-based portal to collect, manage, and evaluate information about the farmers’ market
2010-2014
• CDC Funded
• PRC Core Research
• Study Phase

2014-2019
• CDC Funded
• PRC Core Research
• Plan
• Implement
• Disseminate

2019→
• Capacity Building
• Tailored Models
What is FreshLink?
Vision

FreshLink bridges residents to resources to foster healthy communities.

Mission

To increase farmers' market use among people receiving SNAP benefits through peer-to-peer outreach to promote awareness of and social connectedness to markets.
**Values**

**Welcoming:** Members of the FreshLink team are welcoming by listening, being open minded, and personable to everyone.

**Respectful:** In order to be respectful, FreshLink team members view themselves as equal towards everyone they come in contact with and use active listening to empathize with others. Subject matter expertise is shared as a suggestion not a directive.

**Racial Equity:** FreshLink team members recognize that not all individuals have the same opportunities to be healthy and, in Greater Cleveland, this injustice is rooted in unfair policies and practices that limit opportunities for people of color.

**Educating:** FreshLink team members educate the community by increasing awareness of new information and resources while demonstrating educational points.

**Engaging:** In order to engage the community, members of the FreshLink team possesses a positive and inviting demeanor while being creative in how they approach interacting with individuals.

**Connecting:** By sharing personal experiences, encouraging individuals to utilize resources, and welcoming back individuals returning for assistance, FreshLink team members successfully connect with the community.

**Inspiration:** FreshLink team members will inspire communities by learning from individuals where they are at while sharing enthusiasm for and demonstrating the knowledge the team members themselves possesses.
The Nutritious Food Access Framework suggests 5 main influencers of access to healthy foods

Nutritious Food Access Framework
Freedman et al., 2013, *Journal of Community Practice*

- Economic
  - Household finances
  - Food costs
  - Store incentives
  - Perceived value of food

- Service Delivery
  - Quality and variety of foods sold
  - Staff & service
  - Presentation of store and customer base

- Spatial-Temporal
  - Boundaries of local food environment
  - Diversity of food stores available
  - Travel time and transportation resources
  - Time costs

- Social
  - Cultural foodways, traditions, and norms
  - Discriminatory practices reducing access
  - Relationships and social networks

- Personal
  - Health status
  - Food & nutrition knowledge
  - Food-related identities & preferences

Applied to Greater Cleveland farmers’ market programming

- Economic
  - EBT systems at farmers’ markets
  - Produce Perks incentive program

- Service Delivery
  - Targeted marketing for Produce Perks
  - New customer welcome packets
  - SNAP/EBT welcome booth

- Spatial-Temporal
  - Policies to support urban agriculture in Cleveland
  - High numbers of markets in urban core

- Social
  - FreshFinds

- Personal
  - Nutrition education programming (e.g., EFNEP, SNAP-Ed)
  - Produce Prescriptions
Steps to Developing FLA Model

What are farmers’ market awareness and use patterns among people receiving SNAP? How do we track farmers’ markets use to support evaluation?
- Survey Research: Year 1 (2015)
- Development of FM tracks

How do farmers’ markets fit into food habits?
In-depth Interviews: Year 2 (2015-16)

What are the logistics of the FLA Intervention?
- Pilot Study: Year 2 (2016)

https://access.fmtracks.org/
Audience Question: What are the tools FM managers use for marketing, and how effective are they?

- Coupons in mailers (<=1% redemption)
- Coupons distributed by trusted agencies (<=10%)
- Banners/Signs
FreshLink Ambassador Testimonial
Core Elements of Model

Diffusion of Information within Networks

Build on Connections across Spheres of Influence

Promote Compatibility & Trialability

Community Connection & Presence


Program Timeline

Begin Networking with Potential Outreach Sites

Ambassador Recruitment & Hiring
- Conduct application and interview process
- Hire ambassador(s)

Months 1-3

Program Administration & Facilitation
- Establish and confirm outreach sites
- Schedule, prepare for and host planning sessions

Months 7-8

Ongoing Training, Planning, & Mentoring
- Outline and maintain ambassador expectations for outreach
- General program support

Months 3-6

Ambassador Training
- Host an individual orientation with each ambassador
- Finalize training content, supplies and materials
- Conduct ambassador training

Months 9-11

Farmers’ Market Recruitment & Training
- Identify local markets and hold informational meeting
- Conduct application and interview process
- Facilitate a market training

Month 12

Program Wrap Up & Celebration
- Collect data and program supplies
- Plan a program celebration
- Thank partners, gathers feedback and share outcomes
Market Recruitment & Training

Months 1-3
Ambassador Recruitment & Training

Months 3-6

Examples of FreshLink Training Session Topics

- Market Overview
- Farmers’ Market Scavenger Hunt
- Mock Introductions
- Market Manager Panel
- Team Building Exercise
- Crafting, adapting and practicing messages
- Responding to change talk
Ambassador Recruitment & Training

Field Based Training: Farmers’ Market Scavenger Hunt
Ambassador Recruitment & Training

Market Manager Breakfast: Teambuilding
Ambassador Recruitment & Training
Crafting Messages: Responding to Change Talk
You can use SNAP at the farmers’ market... here’s how.

You can match your SNAP up to $20 with Produce Perks!

Use a FreshLink Coupon & try your local Farmers’ Market for free!
Program Administration

Months 9-12
FreshLink Ambassador program Evaluation

1. Total SNAP dollars spent
2. Total number of SNAP transactions
3. Number of coupons distributed by each FLA
4. Number of coupons redeemed
Who did FreshLink Ambassadors reach out to?

About half (45%) of people that received coupons had never been to a Farmers’ Market, (53%) had children under 18 years old in their household, were SNAP recipients (60%), and were African American.
Number of coupons distributed and redeemed

### 2017 (9 FLA)
- Total # of Events: 155
- Number of Events by Type:
  - One-on-One: 98
  - Social Service: 29
  - Community: 28
- Total # of Coupons Distributed
- Total # of Coupons Redeemed

### 2018 (4 FLA)
- Total # of Events: 111
- Number of Events by Type:
  - One-on-One: 50
  - Social Service: 13
  - Community: 48
- Total # of Coupons Distributed
- Total # of Coupons Redeemed
Audience Question:
About how many coupons were distributed by the FreshLink Ambassadors in 2017 and 2018?

A. 0 to 1000
B. 1001 to 2000
C. 2001 to 3000
D. 3001 to 4000
### Number of coupons distributed and redeemed

#### 2017 (9 FLA)
- **Total # Events**: 155
- **Number of Events by Type**:
  - One-on-One: 98
  - Social Service: 29
  - Community: 28
- **Total # coupons distributed**: 1,126

#### 2018 (4 FLA)
- **Total # Events**: 111
- **Number of Events by Type**:
  - One-on-One: 50
  - Social Service: 13
  - Community: 48
- **Total # of Coupons Redeemed**: 2,473
What percentage of new customers coupons were redeemed at farmers’ markets in 2017 and 2018?

A. 0 – 10%
B. 11-20%
C. 21-30%

Hint: The national average for coupon redemption (such as free-standing coupons in the mail) is less than 1%.

Reminder: The number of coupons distributed by FLA in 2017 and 2018 was 1126 and 2473 respectively.
Number of coupons distributed and redeemed

**2017 (9 FLA)**

- Total # Events: 155
- Number of Events by Type:
  - One-on-One: 98
  - Social Service: 29
  - Community: 28
- Total # coupons distributed: 1,126
- Total # of Coupons Redeemed: 148 (13%)

**2018 (4 FLA)**

- Total # Events: 111
- Number of Events by Type:
  - One-on-One: 50
  - Social Service: 13
  - Community: 48
- Total # coupons distributed: 2,473
- Total # of Coupons Redeemed: 286 (11.5%)
Change in SNAP Sales ($) from 2016 to 2017

FreshLink Markets had 1.7x more growth in SNAP sales.
Market Manager Testimonial

[Images of a woman in front of a Health Neighborhood Prevention Resource Center for Health sign, and scenes from outdoor events with people participating in health-related activities.]
Other Results

• 100% of the Farmers’ Markets participating in the program remained in the program.

• By the second year of the FreshLink Ambassador Program implementation, Farmers’ Markets were willing to pay for some of the costs associated with hiring a FreshLink Ambassador indicating the value of the program to market bottom line.

• Nearly all FreshLink Ambassadors (91%) completed the full program indicating good fit between the model and Ambassador interests.
Lessons Learned

• Having a greater number markets (6), participate in the program allowed for a higher return on coupons – more choice for customers.

• Allowing for ambassadors to create their own schedules provided a more effective outreach process for ambassadors.

• Eliminating a cap on the number of coupons an ambassador could disseminate created higher dissemination and redemption of coupons.
FreshLink Ambassador Toolkit

- FreshLink Facilitator Manual
- FLA Workbook
- FLA Training Curriculum
- FLA Employee Handbook

https://www.prchn.org/PRC HNToolKits.aspx
FreshLink Ambassador Training in Virginia

Date: Wednesday, March 18th
Location: Lynchburg, VA.

For more information contact: Elizabeth Borst
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Organizers/Sponsors: Virginia Fresh Match, Local Environmental Agriculture Project (LEAP), SNAP-ED, Virginia Community Food Connections.
Questions?

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Thank you!!