Hunger Free Community Coalition Rapid-Response Assessment and Action Tool

(Applicable to COVID-19 & Future Crisis Response)

This tool provides guidance to coalitions on how to quickly assess the resources and needs of your community during a crisis, allowing you to more effectively identify where your coalition can be most impactful in moving to action. It will walk you through a simple process of identifying needs and resources, creating an action plan and moving to implementation.

STEP 1 | CALL TO ACTION

Schedule a coalition meeting to kick off a discussion on how the coalition will identify community resources, identify issues, and develop a plan for moving to action during the crisis. In addition to a plan, this meeting should build energy and interest in working collaboratively to address hunger during the current crisis.

Meeting Planning:

· In a crisis, you may need to schedule an emergency meeting in order to address the crisis in real time and not wait until your next meeting. If you are unable to meet in person, there are several free online meeting platforms[HM1] available.

· Coalition members may have professional or personal experiences related to the crisis that may inform their capacity to participate. Consider taking notes, recording the meeting, or following up with coalition members interested in participating but unable to attend the scheduled meeting.

Creating an Agenda:

· *Craft an agenda that will help keep the coalition focused on your goal.* Include discussion time for members to share about their current operations and how the crisis has affected their work, including any changes in their ability to serve their clients and immediate needs that they have. Also, include discussion

time about what is happening in the broader community, outside of the work of member organizations.

  ○ Questions to Consider:

    ● What organizations are still open?
      ○ When, what and how are they operating?
      ○ What are their needs?
    ● What else is happening to address food access during the crisis?
    ● What are the major challenges to feeding our community during this crisis?
    ● Whom do we need to reach out to that is not here?
    ● What follow up information do we need?

STEP 2 | WRITE IT DOWN

During your meeting, document the resources and needs discussed. We recommend you create a document prior to the meeting to detail what you learn and designate someone to take notes. Your coalition can then use this document moving forward to track resources and needs in your community during the crisis.

You can create your own format or you can utilize this example from Hays County. We recommend utilizing Google Docs or Google Sheets (both are free) so you can share the document easily with your coalition members. This will give organizations the ability to update and make changes about their own organizations and add missing data from other efforts in the community. This will also encourage commitment and motivation to keep focus until the next meeting.

You can keep this simple. Collect basic information and organize the following items in your chosen format:

  ● Organization Name

  ● Operations (Open/Close) With Dates

  ● Services Offered

  ● What Are The Needs

  ● Contact Information

STEP 3 | INFORMATION GATHERING

Identify follow up tasks needed to understand the resources and needs of your community outside of what coalition members in attendance are doing.

- Assign information-gathering tasks to coalition members
- Provide specific instructions or a template of what information you would like coalition members to collect (this could be your shared tracking document)
- Set a deadline for gathering and adding the information to the shared tracking document
- Set a time to meet to review the information gathered about the communities current resources and needs

STEP 4 | BRAINSTORM

Once you have completed your information gathering tasks, come together as a coalition to brainstorm how you can collaboratively support existing community efforts or develop creative, collaboratively implemented actions that addresses identified needs during the crisis. Create a list of potential activities that the coalition could take on.

Before doing this, encourage your coalition members to review the shared document you created early on in preparation for this discussion. This will help to ensure everyone is on the same page about the current resources and community needs during the crisis.

Designate someone to take notes of ideas that come up during the discussion and consider creating a working document where members can participate and edit with their ideas before and after the meeting. Use questions such as:

Existing Resources:

- What available resources exist that can fill the identified gaps?

- Are all of the available programs accessible and responsive to the needs of all households in the community?

Needs/Gaps

- What gaps still exist after connecting available resources?

- Who is not being served or served adequately?

- What can we do collaboratively as a coalition to address the remaining community needs and gaps in services during this crisis?

STEP 5 | ACTIVITY PRIORITIZATION

Next, your coalition will need to prioritize identified activities to take on and determine the steps to move to action.

For each activity idea mentioned, consider the following questions in your discussion:

- How much of an impact would this activity have on helping the community?

- Is this an activity that would benefit from a collaborative approach by multiple organizations or individuals or could one organization or individual do it by themselves?

- Do we currently have the resources among the group to implement or would it require bringing in new resources?

- How long will it take to implement this activity successfully? Can we implement in a relatively short timeframe? *With attention to different factors on how the current crisis may affect implementation.*

Once you have determined which activities your coalition would like to move forward with, ask who would be willing to take the lead on pulling folks together for each activity identified. Clearly define who is responsible for leading the work. *If no one is willing to take the lead, put the activity on hold and move onto the next one, you do not want to pick an activity if there is no leadership behind it*.

STEP 6 | DEVELOP A PLAN

Once you have leadership for each identified activity, you will need to determine what the steps will be to implement the activity, including who will take on which tasks, deadlines, and any tracking metrics.

- Establish a task force or action team to focus on the identified activity

    ○ Who will participate? Who from within the coalition may be interested in joining? Is there anyone else from the community who may want to participate?

    ○ Engage all members of the action team in the development of your plan and in making decisions to ensure you are drawing on the expertise and creativity of your whole group and develop buy-in.

- Identify the necessary steps to implement your activity. Consider some of the following elements:

  - What logistical and/or administrative support will you need?

  - Will any training be required for coalition members or volunteers?

  - What resources do you need to implement this activity? Do you need funding or in-kind support? If so, who could potentially provide it?

  - What are your target dates? When will you need tasks completed?

  - How will you track the impact or results of the activity? How will you gather the data you need?

- Identify who will complete each task and remind everyone of the agreed upon deadlines for completion.

  - Consider distributing a written action plan including the commitments of who has agreed to lead and participate in implementing each action item to promote clearer communication and accountability from all involved.

  - Save all your documents and designate a folder on a platform like Google Drive so that your members are able to review the information in the future.

STEP 7 | TAKE ACTION

After developing a plan and assigning tasks, it is time to take action and implement your project.

- Complete assigned tasks and implement your project

- Plan time for check-in's or group meetings as necessary

- Be open to making adjustments or changes to action plans in order to overcome unforeseen challenges or to achieve stronger results. If needed, take the time to reevaluate as a group and adjust your plan.

STEP 7 | CELEBRATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS TOGETHER!

Make sure to celebrate small victories and accomplishments along the way. You are in the middle of a crisis, addressing a complex issue, so take time to celebrate incremental steps as well as big wins!