



Population Health Trust May Newsletter

Community Advisory Board to the Skagit County Board of Health

May 2024



The transition into long, warm summer days is cause for celebration for many. In this spirit of celebration, the Food Policy Council (FPC) took time during a recent meeting to reflect on its accomplishments so far. While still in the early stages of implementing the Food Security Plan, the group has already achieved much together. In addition to the wins noted below, FPC members expressed gratitude for the new partnerships they have formed with other food system players. They cited the intentional gathering of leaders from across our local food system as the impetus for new program initiatives, community events, and funding opportunities.

Resources, Programs, and Education

To promote greater coordination among resource providers, several FPC members collaborated with Skagit County Public Health, Help Me Grow Skagit, and Community Action of Skagit County to host 70 resource navigators in a day-long event. Goals for the event were to connect, support,

and uplift resource navigation professionals, allowing for more effective resource referral and service utilization by community members. A special focus was given to food access options in the community. Attendees provided positive feedback on the event, citing the opportunity to network as being especially valuable. The group plans to host the gatherings quarterly.

Food Surplus and Waste

Several FPC members participated in a Food Waste Prevention Coalition convened by Washington State University Extension. The goals were to plan an event and awareness campaign in celebration of National Food Waste Prevention Week. Achievements included a robust educational awareness campaign, a day of learning and resource gathering at the Port of Skagit, and the development of a [resource hub](#) for information on food waste prevention. The group will continue to meet as it plans for future community outreach events.

Storage and Distribution

FPC meetings provided an opportunity for the Skagit Valley Food Co-Op and Helping Hands Food Bank to partner in response to community needs. Many clients at Helping Hands Food Bank have requested access to specialty grains. These are often challenging for food banks to secure, but easier for local grocers to order. To meet the need, the Skagit Valley Food Co-Op now orders some bulk items for Helping Hands Food Bank, charging them only “at cost.” This is one of many actions the Skagit Valley Food Co-Op has taken to support its Food Access for All initiative.

Applications for Funding

The FPC supported a series of grant applications designed to increase access to food, especially local and culturally familiar foods. While awardees have not yet been announced, it is an accomplishment that several local organizations applied for over \$270,000 in funding. Without support from the FPC, these organizations may not have had the capacity to seek out this funding.

It is an exciting time for the FPC as momentum begins to build. If you would like to review the plan, you can [find it here](#). If you would like to be part of the movement or to learn more, contact Kas at kchurch@co.skagit.wa.us or at (360) 416-2016.

Thank you for your partnership in keeping Skagit County healthy!



The Population Health Trust was founded in 2015 and is the Community Advisory Board to the Skagit County Board of Health. For more information, check out our [website](#).

[Population Health Trust](#)

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