

# Regional & National Networking

What is working & why?

# Today's Discussion

- Introduction:
  - Vanessa Zajfen, CFJ  
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- Networks developed by UEPI & CFJ
  - National Farm to School Network
  - Healthy School Food Coalition
- Barriers & what is working
- Southern California GFN

# National Farm to School Network



- **BASIS:** Coordinate & support the development of a rapidly growing movement.
- **OBJECTIVE:** Institutionalize and promote farm to school programs as viable models for improving the economic viability of family-scale farmers and supporting child nutrition efforts.
- **TOOLS:** National staff, RLAs & national partners /advisors, working framework around 5 programming priorities, pooled resources, website, consistent marketing & media identity, policy advocacy.
- **SUCCESS:** Unifying identity, outreach potential, shared tools & strategies & more F2S programs.

# Healthy School Food Coalition



- SCOPE: Regionally specific, LAUSD specific.
- BASIS: Developed from direct need for quality food & improved food environments.
- OBJECTIVE: Develop & implement comprehensive food and nutrition policies in the LAUSD through community organizing.
- TOOLS: Community mobilization (regular meetings & trainings), focused goals, resources (newsletter), participation in LAUSD committees, identity & community.
- SUCCESS: Soda & junk food ban, healthier & vegetarian lunch options, & student representation on menu selection committees.

# Barriers in Network Development

- Scope of network: geography & stakeholders
  - Allocation of resources.
  - Disparity in skill levels & regional differences.
  - Establishing effective communication strategies.
- Goals & priorities
  - Grant deliverables influence network development & goals.
  - Reaching consensus on mission, vision, and goals.
  - Developing “buy-in”, participant-driven while maintaining focus & providing useful services to members.

# What's working?

- Identify members' strengths & build on them.
- Reduce redundancy, identify available resources within the network.
- Set realistic goals & expectations for network and its members.
- Fulfill a need & provide a service to members.
- Trust, flexibility, and embrace collaborative working model on everything.
- Building each other into grants!

# Southern California GFN

- SCOPE: Regional; Ventura/Santa Barbara to San Diego and Inland.
- BASIS: Develop concrete solutions to an identified need and need to bridge industry & GF advocates.
  - Does industry perceive this need, uncertain about industry desire to work collaboratively?
- OBJECTIVE: Develop arsenal of tools to assist and/or allow industry to develop local food solutions, primarily through development of business services and providing TA & O.
- TOOLS: and framework is TBA...
- SUCCESS: Members, scope and singular focus.

# Challenges thus far for SCGFN...

- Reduce redundancy in network development in CA.
- Physical coordination amongst members.
  - Do we rely on web based social networks? Which one?
- How to successfully integrate member projects & GFN objectives?
- How to marry unlikely bed fellows?...prove our value, need & strength to industry.

# Thank you

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