



Successful Healthway Projects

Food Cent\$ at the Foodbank

The Food Cent\$ at the Foodbank program provided educational training and supported welfare agencies to develop healthy eating policies to increase the provision of healthy foods to people on low incomes.

Case Study

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Food Cent\$ at the Foodbank

Organisation:	Foodbank of WA Inc.
Healthway funding:	\$25,000 (Funded: partial wages of health promotion officer, venue hire)
Program Period:	12 months
Target Group:	People receiving food aid from any of Foodbank's 215 support agencies, staff and volunteers of Foodbank and its support agencies, food industry members
Year:	1997 – 1998
Number of Participants:	18,000 – 20,000 individuals receiving Foodbank food aid, 5 staff and 25 volunteers of Foodbank, and many from support agencies and the food industry

What was the project about?

People on low incomes are at high risk of poor food and nutrition habits. Some rely on food aid provided by the Foodbank of WA Inc., a non-profit organisation which collects surplus, salvaged and donated food from the food industry and acts as a distribution point for welfare agencies. This project was developed in response to an identified need for the Foodbank of WA Inc. and its numerous welfare agencies to align their food provision with the "Dietary Guidelines for Australians", so that welfare agency clients are supplied healthy, nutritious food.

The Food Cent\$ at the Foodbank project provided educational training and supported welfare agencies to develop healthy eating policies to increase the provision of healthy foods. The project also included a promotional campaign to raise awareness among welfare agencies of the benefits of providing healthy foods to low SES clients.

What strategies were used?

- A Food Cent\$ "train the trainer" program for Foodbank and other welfare agency staff and volunteers. Three 1.5 hour sessions included budgeting, cooking and a "Food Cent\$" supermarket tour.
- Welfare agency staff and volunteers conducted Food Cent\$ sessions with their clients.
- A promotional campaign, including food tastings, recipe handouts and nutrition education materials, was run from the Foodbank, aimed at welfare agency staff collecting supplies.
- The project made regular contact throughout the campaign, by telephone and mail, to provide support and information to all welfare agencies.

- The Foodbank of WA newsletter provided regular updates on the program.
- A media campaign included articles in the West Australian and local newspapers, the Healthway newsletter and electronic media such as radio and TV interviews.
- Other strategies included the development of a brochure illustrating an 'ideal' food parcel, to guide welfare agencies in supplying a balanced range of foods to their clients.

What did the project achieve?

- 220 welfare agencies registered with Foodbank were contacted to participate in the project.
- 170 advisors were trained and 11 Foodbank volunteers received Food Cent\$ training.
- 54 Food Cent\$ classes were held, with a total of 480 welfare agency staff and their clients attending the classes.
- After attending training, welfare agency staff and their clients showed an increase in nutrition and budgeting knowledge.

What Healthway had to say about the "Food Cent\$ at the Foodbank" project:

Food Cent\$ at the Foodbank was a well coordinated project resulting in very good outcomes in a difficult environment. The project was an excellent way of targeting those who are at significant risk of adverse health outcomes.

What Were the Effective Health Promotion Elements?

1

PLANNING

The application was based on recommendations from earlier research.

The project was planned to avoid peak periods such as Christmas when welfare agencies would be under pressure.

The Foodbank worked with the Department of Health, support agencies, welfare agencies, welfare officers within local government authorities and the food industry to plan the project.

Funding was also secured from other sources to assist in developing and implementing the project.

2

IMPLEMENTATION

Project strategies focussed on:

- Training and educating staff, volunteers and low income clients of the Foodbank and other welfare agencies.
- Supporting welfare agencies to develop healthy eating policies to increase provision of healthy food to clients.
- Food industry suppliers were supported to supply healthy foods to the Foodbank.

Project information was disseminated through:

- Regular articles in the Foodbank newsletter "Banking on Food".
- Holding a high profile project launch.
- Regular press releases resulting in articles in local and state newspapers.
- Radio and TV interviews.

Once trained, Foodbank staff and volunteers were able to continue Food Cent\$ training for their clients to increase the reach of the project.

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EVALUATION

Process evaluation of the project included:

- Detailed records of Food Cent\$ sessions and participants.
- Post session questionnaires to measure behavioral intentions including use of recipes.
- Contacting trainers for feedback on subsequent sessions.

The impact of the project was assessed through telephone interviews, conducted 1-4 months after training, to evaluate behaviour changes in welfare agency staff and clients and collect feedback on training.

To measure longer term outcomes self-completed questionnaires were posted to all participating welfare agencies, to evaluate changes in:

- Food budgeting, preparation and cooking.
- Use of Food Cent\$ recipes.
- Food Cent\$ information shared with clients.

The results from the project were widely disseminated through reports, press articles, peer-reviewed journal articles and conference presentations.

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SUSTAINABILITY

Following the evaluation of the project, the campaign resources were revised to ensure that the hand-outs were simple, bold and highly visual.

The trained volunteers formed a Food Cent\$ committee to continue implementing the program. The committee was successful in securing further support from the Department of Health.

Training continued to be offered to those who missed the opportunity during the Healthway-funded program.

A second phase of the project was planned to target clients with low literacy and numeracy levels, those with specific health conditions and Aboriginal people.

The final report provided a comprehensive record of the project, increasing its transferability.

What lessons were learned?

- Of the welfare agency staff who received training, only a small proportion went on to run Food Cent\$ classes themselves due to lack of confidence, lack of appropriate training facilities and heavy demands on welfare agencies.
- Food Cent\$ resources were popular among welfare agency clients. It is essential that these are appropriate for the literacy and numeracy skills of all clients.
- Training must be short and entertaining as some welfare clients face personal challenges and may have limited attention spans.
- Sessions need to be flexible as some participants were only able to attend during school hours and providing crèche facilities would encourage carers of children to attend.



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