CEWG Equity Questions for Work Groups
Food Waste and Recovery WG
Date: 2/27/2019

Purpose

Establishing a general internal understanding of our role in addressing work with an equity lens.

Some major themes arose from our conversation:

- Community Wants/Needs
- Sources & Resources
- Decision Makers & Structure of Decision Making
- Work Group Representation & Membership
- Community Voice & Community Advisory Groups

Questions

1. What sources of information drive your work plan/scope of work?
    a. Quantitative
        i. National or local data
    b. Qualitative
        i. Articles, plans
    c. Community input

When MFPC formed in 2012, they went through a process of defining issue areas (about 5 identified, of which food waste/reduction was one). This was largely an internal interest and originally focused more on biodigestion – field trips (UW-Oshkosh). Capital expenses to build such a facility were very high and focus of the group re-directed on reduction and recovery. HFFA and CAC/United Way Community Plan.

2. Have you gathered community input on your work group's issues?
    a. If so, how?

Originally, this was focused on staff (engineering and streets) convos and more recently had a presence at events (food day 2016, etc). In recent years, gleaners event for opps and challenges; 2019 – food waste event for business; community interest and attendance at meetings.

3. How has community input informed your work group's progress to-date?

From formal events, like the gleaners convocation, this has informed other approaches (food waste guide, business food waste event, etc).

4. Who benefits from the projects of your work groups?
    a. Who is impacted? Is it positive, negative, or neutral?
    b. How do you know?

Broadly – all members of the food systems (everyone). More specifically, community members in need are affected by recovery efforts (positive). Pantries/banks have seen more access to local, fresh foods (positive). Volunteers within the food recovery are also affected. The group could not think of many negative effects.

5. How is your work group's membership defined?
    a. What efforts have taken place to include non-MFPC members on the work group?

The Food Waste and Recovery Work Group has joint membership from the Madison Food Policy Council and Dane County Food Council but has invited community members expert in food recovery and food waste to participate on the work group who are not members of either food council. Additionally, there have been many members of the public who have attended the publicly-noticed meetings over the years, showing that there is community interest in the issue.

6. What voices are missing?
    a. What do you envision asking them?
    b. When do you ask for input?

Communities of color; "regular people". We (and really all committees/councils) could do a better job at bringing info/meetings to people. We need to have a structure that allows for people to have a voice and then for the voice to be heard and affect change. "Service population" is usually not represented at the table – the folks we serve.

7. How could we draw from university resources to help advance this work?

We have representation from UWEX; we have used UW interns in the past (food waste guide); there are other folks on campus who are looking at food waste – the response to this Q is based more in projects, etc.

- Campus Kitchens
- Food Recovery Network
- Food Shed
- Morgridge Ctr – volunteer opps with students
- Food Justice Class – comms support work
- CALS – Food Science

Other thoughts

- Community paradigms on food waste → e.g. compared to recycling
- We don't have the policy/regulatory/legal landscape or financial/infrastructure to really deal with the scale of food waste we are currently dealing with

- Education is also a crucial component; getting into schools and educating students while they are young
    - Recycling for young people v. older people is a habit v. a learned behavior
    - Standards and expectations around food waste
    - Small, inexpensive steps that can be taken on food waste/recovery