

A photograph of a person from behind, walking down a hallway. They are wearing a plaid shirt, dark pants, and sneakers. They are carrying a black bag with the 'Meals on Wheels' logo. The photo is framed by a green border and is partially overlaid by a large blue triangle pointing left.

MEALS ON WHEELS

ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXPO

2018

Tips and Tricks to Increasing Menu Options for Your Clients



Michael Buck

Operations and Program Manager

Meals on Wheels People

Mike.Buck@MOWP.org

Why this direction?

- Traditionally underserved community groups are connected to additional services
- New seniors expect a diversity of flavor across ethnic cuisines
- Provide culturally appropriate social interactions
- Over 1/3 of our clients self identify as ethnically diverse



Why this direction?

- State and County contracts moving to culturally specific and culturally responsive programming
- Able to address health disparities in different ethnic communities
- Additional revenue being created through partnerships and contracts
- Growing ethnic populations around the Portland Metro area



Responsive Programming

- Ethnic Meals
- Vegetarian Options
- Outreach
- Daily Choice of Menu Options
- Surveys/Advisory Committees
- Meal Planning Committee
- Hiring Ethnically Diverse Staff



Audience Question

How does your site offer choice in your meal program?



Choice at Meal Sites

- IRCO (Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization)
 - Serves Eastern European, African, Indian, and Asian senior communities a made from scratch or modified Meals on Wheels People meal
 - Work with cultural restrictions that include sending meals home for clients that are fasting, unable to have food prepared for them outside of their caste system, preparing meals without pork and offering vegan soups and salad dressings in order to serve meals to those groups of seniors.



Choice at Meal Sites

- Centro Cultural
 - Partnering with a Latino Community Center to provide programming and culturally appropriate meals for the Latino community in rural service area
- El Programa Hispano
 - Serves Latino immigrant senior community culturally appropriate meals
- Pi Nee Waus Elders
 - Serves Native-American seniors meals and provides a gathering opportunity on a weekly basis
- Friendly House (Multi-generational LGBTQ+)
 - Multi-generational site that's especially inclusive of LGBTQ seniors
- Ability to cater to diverse clients at meal sites
 - Annual surveys sent to program participants indicate that 80% of the clients believe that the meals are ethnically diverse and have good variety

What we're doing

- Menu is on a 7-week cycle. 40% of the meals served are ethnically diverse
- Salad bars
- Dining centers cater to a wide variety of diet restrictions
- Ability to switch out proteins on request for home delivered and congregate sites
- Work with cultural restrictions providing options for certain ethnic groups
- Offer vegan meals, soups and salad dressings
- Annual surveys indicate that 80% of the clients believe that the meals are ethnically diverse and have good variety

Menu Options

- Offer second and third menu options each day
 - Menu is served on a 7-week cycle with two or more options offered at dining sites.
 - Dining sites develop menu options to fit their clients tastes. Examples include ethnic meal offered each day as a menu option, Recipes can be modified to easily represent several different regions and cultural groups.
- Vegetarian menu offered
 - Soups, entrée salads, salad bars offered at dining centers
 - Full vegetarian option for home delivered meals
- 40% of the menu options are ethnically diverse.
 - Examples include: Taiwanese Beef Stew, Somali Chicken, Sweet and Sour Chicken, Pork Gyro's, Chicken Chile Verde, Stir-fry Pork. Chinese Chicken Salad, Tofu stir-fry, and Chicken Yakisoba

Human Resources

The right staff makes the difference

- Ethnic Nutrition Meal Coordinator position
 - This person works with our dietician to create a wide variety of ethnically appropriate meals for several meal sites and contracts.
 - This person works with our dietician to create a wide variety of ethnically appropriate meals for several meal sites and contracts.



Human Resources

The right staff makes the difference

- Food Service Committee
 - Menu items are discussed in detail and Kitchen Coordinators are encouraged to bring in new menu items to taste test with the group
 - Made up of Registered Dietician, Site Managers, Kitchen Coordinators and other staff members
 - Discuss food waste at individual sites and work to reduce it where possible
- Quality Kitchen Coordinators putting their own spin on menu selections
 - Diverse staff members around the organization
 - They bring their cultural expertise into their individual kitchens



Next Steps

- Seek new opportunities
- Outreach
- Increase ability and capacity of staff members
- Expand variety of menu items
- Monitoring food waste



QUESTIONS?

