



Preparing Future Registered Dietitian Nutritionists for Working with Populations with Food Insecurity: A New Food Insecurity/Food Banking Supervised Practice Concentration Piloted with Dietetic Interns



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A 2012 FEEDING AMERICA survey of food bank managers revealed a need to better prepare entry-level registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs) for working within a food bank and/or working with populations with food insecurity.¹ Feeding America is the nation's largest hunger-relief organization, with a network of more than 200 food banks in the United States.² The Feeding America survey included responses from 100 food bank managers, the majority of whom (60%) reported working with RDNs and dietetic interns. The results of the survey suggest that although food bank managers valued working with RDNs and interns, they also reported that many RDNs lacked necessary skills for working with a population with food insecurity.

Examples of such skills include a gap in ability to translate science-based information into practical information and provide relevant food preparation techniques and recipe recommendations for food bank clients. One survey respondent stated, "Many [RDNs] who come to volunteer have little experience working with low-income communities and struggle to translate their science-based information to be more practical for clients; some seem to have difficulty meeting clients where they're at and making recommendations for incremental changes."¹ The results of this survey prompted exploring the feasibility of developing a Food Insecurity/Food Banking Supervised Practice Concentration (Concentration) to better prepare future dietetics professionals to be leaders in this area.

In 2012, the National Dairy Council provided a 2-year educational grant to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Foundation (Academy Foundation) and Feeding America to form the Future of Food (FOF) initiative.³ One of the aims of the initiative was to raise awareness of food insecurity as a public health issue. The Academy Foundation led the development of several food insecurity-focused educational resources, including continuing professional development webinars, ready-made presentations, and an infographic for Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics members. In addition, the Academy Foundation pursued the feasibility of developing a food bank concentration to better train future RDNs for career paths in food banking. Academy Foundation staff sought guidance from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Education staff

(Education Staff) who agreed to provide technical support for the project.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE FOOD BANKING CONCENTRATION

The first step the Education Staff advised was to convene a group of food banking experts to identify the skills and knowledge necessary for an entry-level RDN working in a food bank. In April 2013, the Academy Foundation and Feeding America hosted a 2-day meeting with the newly formed Nutrition Solutions Working Group (NSWG). The NSWG comprises approximately 20 RDNs who work in food banks across the United States. These subject matter expert RDNs were led through an exercise to identify "essential," "should have," and "nice to have" knowledge and skills needed for an entry-level RDN working in a food bank.

Through a series of small group discussions and ranking strategies, the most critical skills and knowledge were identified and sorted into three major domains: nutrition education, food bank management, and food systems. Eight RDN members of the NSWG volunteered to form a dietetic internship subcommittee (DI subcommittee) and agreed to assist with the development of the Concentration. Members of the workgroup collaborated to develop the Concentration's activities and evaluations via e-mail and several calls between July 2013 and May 2014.

The Education Staff reviewed the extensive list of skills and knowledge identified by the NSWG, and then encouraged Academy Foundation staff to map this list to the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and

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Interns	Dietetic Internship Directors	Preceptors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity provides ample experience in all aspects of food banking and food insecurity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity provided the intern with experience important to better understand food insecurity/food banking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity meets the needs of the food bank community/clients
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity complements the unit rotation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity complements the unit rotation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity fits the mission and the goals of the food bank
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instructions to conduct the activity were clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instructions to conduct the activity were clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity complements the unit rotation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity helps enhance critical thinking skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity helps enhance critical thinking skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instructions to conduct the activity were clear
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity helps enhance cultural sensitivity skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity helps enhance cultural sensitivity skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity content is appropriate for food bank community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity helps enhance communication/presentation skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity helps enhance communication/presentation skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity provides ample experience in all aspects of food banking and food insecurity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity helps enhance designing handout/lesson planning skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity helps enhance lesson planning skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The time assigned to complete this activity is adequate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The time assigned to complete this activity is adequate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity helps enhance skills in designing handouts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity integrates well into preceptor's workload
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All components of this activity could be completed in a timely manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All components of this activity could be completed in a timely manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity enhances knowledge and skills necessary for entry-level RDN in a food bank
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity was beneficial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity was beneficial to this rotation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other feedback: Exactly how much time did it take you to administer this activity (in hours or minutes)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity contributes to professional growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity contributes to professional growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other feedback: Exactly how much time did it take you to evaluate this activity (in hours or minutes)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity enhances knowledge and skills necessary for entry-level RDNs in a food bank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity enhances knowledge and skills necessary for entry-level RDN in a food bank 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other feedback: Exactly how much time did it take you to complete this activity? (in hours or minutes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The intern evaluation for this activity was clear and included questions that helped to evaluate the quality of the intern's work 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other feedback: How much time did it take you to support the intern in completing this activity (in hours or minutes)? Comments: 	

Figure 1. Survey questions for dietetic interns, dietetic internship directors, and preceptors for each learning activity. RDN=registered dietitian nutritionist.

Dietetics (ACEND) 2012 list of Core Knowledge & Competencies.⁴ ACEND and Education Staff also recommended identifying elevated knowledge and skill competencies that the Concentration would fulfill.

The DI subcommittee worked in three teams to address each identified concentration domain: nutrition education, food bank management, and food systems. The teams, each composed of two or three RDNs

working in food banks, drafted learning activities designed to help dietetic interns develop the desired entry-level food bank knowledge and skills for an RDN. Altogether, 19 learning activity drafts were completed in August 2013.

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