

Collaborating for Clients (C4C) FAQ

What is the Collaborating for Clients Initiative?

Collaborating for Clients is an initiative to help food bank clients achieve stability and self-sufficiency. The primary objective of the Collaborating for Clients Initiative is to identify ways Feeding America can support food banks in planning and implementing local collaborative initiatives that address the multiple needs that hinder client stability and self-sufficiency. Feeding America started Phase One of the Collaborating for Clients initiative in 2013.

What happened in Phase One of the Collaborating for Clients Initiative?

Thanks to the generosity of the Laura and John Arnold Foundation, Feeding America staff and a team of food bank leaders partnered with the Urban Institute (UI), an independent non-profit research organization to complete a year-long planning process. Visit [C4C Advisory Team's HungerNet Page](#) for more information on who was involved.

This planning process provided Feeding America with a structured way to answer the following question: *How can Feeding America leverage its core service of food provision and also build partnerships to help clients achieve more stable and self-sufficient lives?*

During Phase One of the Collaborating for Clients Initiative the team completed the following activities:

- Identified the problems that hinder client stability
- Identified an initial target population
- Learned from other sectors engaged in collaborative work and assessed the work underway in the network
- Created dialogue in the network to expand insights and engage leadership
- Developed a framework for identifying national partners and implementing local collaborative planning processes in the next phase of the Collaborating for Clients Initiative

To read about some of the team's findings after conducting these activities, read the [C4C Master Case](#).

What recommendations did the team make for structuring the Collaborating for Clients Initiative?

Based on data analysis and research, the team recommended that the Collaborating for Clients Initiative should:

- Initially focus on households with children
- Target partnerships and strategies for food, housing, health and employment
- Support local planning and collaborative initiatives, rather than implementation of specific models

Why did the C4C national advisory team recommend households with children as a target population?

According to the USDA, the rates of food insecurity for households with children are higher than the national average--especially for single mothers with children. Furthermore, more than one third of Feeding America's clients are households with children. People of all ages need and deserve the help to live stable, self-sufficient lives. However, Collaborating for Clients needs to focus its efforts at this early stage, and the evidence suggests households with children as a starting point.

Why did the C4C national advisory team recommend food, housing, health, and employment as priorities? Why not education?

In *Hunger in America 2010*, a national survey of Feeding America's clients, families with children reported multiple challenges in addition to food insecurity. Their primary concerns were health, employment, and housing. Households with children need support in each of these areas to achieve stable and self-sufficient lives.

While education also helps children to improve their circumstances, we do not prioritize education partnerships for two reasons.

- 1) Several local and national initiatives already focus on child education.
- 2) Feeding America's clients typically are not asking for educational assistance for their children. Instead, they seek to improve their immediate economic and social conditions.

Collaborating for Clients is not intended to guide the nation toward long-term educational outcomes. However, Feeding America will explore partnerships with education organizations to improve immediate socioeconomic outcomes. For example, Feeding America might work with schools to improve students' family stability. Feeding America might also partner with adult education organizations to support workforce development.

Why did the C4C national advisory team recommend that the initiative support local planning and collaborations rather than scaling specific programs?

Although Collaborating for Clients cannot prescribe specific actions to improve specific communities, it *can* support local planning processes and collaborative initiatives. Feeding America will work with food banks and national organizations to set broad, long term outcomes for the initiative. Feeding America will also develop frameworks and tools to help communities:

- Assess community needs and core problems,
- Find solutions to local needs,
- Develop and maintain collaborations, and
- Measure progress

To learn more, read the [C4C Master Case](#).

What next steps will Feeding America take to further develop the Collaborating for Clients Initiative?

During Phase Two of the Collaborating for Clients Initiative (starting in January 2014) staff at Feeding America's National Office is going to:

- **Develop a client-centered outcomes framework** in collaboration with national partners and the network that will guide how this work is implemented in the future.
- **Engage the network** to socialize the initiative, gain insights, develop buy-in and build a platform for peer learning with the network and national office staff.
- **Create an implementation plan** and tools to support the network in local planning and execution of the Collaborating for Clients Initiative.
- **Engage potential national partners** in initial discussions with the goal of identifying national cornerstone partners for the Collaborating for Clients Initiative.
- **Engage funding community** in discussions to identify streams to support the implementation of the Collaborating for Clients Initiative.
- **Determine national governance structure** for Collaborating for Clients Initiative. Conduct research on data systems and

- **Identify an approach to track client data** for Collaborating for Clients

How can I learn more about Collaborating for Clients or get involved?

Jessica Jelinski (312-641-7819) is the Director of Partnerships for Collaborating for Clients. She cultivates national partnerships for the initiative. **Eileen Hyde (312-641-5675)** is the Director of Network Engagement for Collaborating for Clients. She engages the network and builds network capacity to implement the Collaborating for Clients Initiative. Please reach out to Jessica or Eileen with any questions. Here are other ways to get connected:

- **Email C4C@feedingamerica.org** to ask questions, share comments, seek technical assistance or share the great work you are doing in your community.
- **Sign-up for the [C4C list serve](#)** to get updates on the Collaborating for Clients Initiative.
- **Join the [C4C Affinity Group](#)** to discuss Collaborating for Clients with other food banks and National Office staff.
- **Post on the [C4C HungerNet Discussion Board](#)** to ask and answer questions about Collaborating for Clients.