

## **General Population and Low-Income Population Focus Groups**

### ***Background and Methodology***

As part of a comprehensive community food assessment, Waushara Food Connections conducted ten focus group discussions with residents of Waushara County over a seven-month period in an effort to gather qualitative data on household and community food security. More specifically, the purpose of the group discussions was to assess how people get food in an effort to understand how our community can improve the accessibility and availability of food resources.

In addition to providing assessment data, the discussions that evolved through these focus group sessions resulted in increased community awareness of food security issues. The focus group sessions also led to the development of partnerships and the identification of participants interested in joining our Steering Committee.

Ten focus group sessions were conducted, five with individuals from low-income households and five from the general population within a 10-week period (between December 4, 2009 and February 12, 2010). Four of these focus group sessions were comprised solely of low-income residents, while the other four groups had residents of mixed-income ranges. Five focus group sessions took place in Wautoma, two in Poy Sippi, and one in Wild Rose. From the Western part of the county, two focus group sessions were conducted, one in Plainfield with low-income residents and one in Hancock with mixed-income residents. These groups took place on May 12, 2010 and June 1, 2010. All of the groups were held at neutral places, easily accessible to the target population.

The focus group session conducted in Plainfield was conducted in English and Spanish. Ethnicity and race were not asked of all focus group participants. Despite not asking it of all focus group participants, ten percent (10%) of participants did identify themselves as Hispanic, Latino, or Mexican.

In total, sixty-seven residents of Waushara County participated in the 10 focus group discussions. Of these sixty-seven people, thirty-three (49%) live in the South Central part of the county (twenty-eight from the Wautoma, three from the Redgranite, and two from the Neshkoro), seven (10%) are from the North part of the county (all seven from the Wild Rose), sixteen (24%) are from the Western part of the county (seven from Plainfield, six from Hancock, and three from Coloma), and eleven (16%) are from the Eastern region (one from Berlin, two from Pine River and eight from Poy Sippi).

Fifty-one (76%) of the focus group participants were women and sixteen (24%) were men. Age ranges spanned from the late 20's to the early eighties. Represented within these groups were participants with young children and older children, single adults, individuals with disabilities, and non-English speaking residents.

Focus group sessions were advertised through identified service providers i.e. food pantry managers, Senior Meal Site coordinators, church ministers, and Head Start teachers. The discussions were facilitated by the Waushara Food Connections Project Directors and volunteer steering committee members.

## *Appendix B2: Background and Methodology*

Each focus group session followed a similar format. Participants were assured of confidentiality and signed consent forms for audio-recording the sessions. They then responded to a series of questions related to their experiences, needs, and observations accessing food (see Appendix B4 for an Introduction Script and a list of the focus group questions). Notes were taken by the facilitators during the sessions and used in conjunction with the audio-recordings to analyze the data to produce the findings that follow. The results of the focus group study were summarized based on a logical grouping of the responses that were received and so the questions as headings was not used.