



# Fighting Food Insecurity

Free Produce & Better Health for  
Older Hoosiers



# Presenter Introductions

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Solutions

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**Kristen LaEace**, CEO, Indiana  
Association of Area Agencies on  
Aging



# Program Background


- Anthem Blue Cross & Blue Shield Foundation
    - \$4.4 million over three years with statewide reach
  - Applied Fall 2021 with award announced June 2022
    - Indiana AAAs conceived program design based on meal program participant experience:
      - Desire for additional fresh food
      - Food insecurity
    - Funder required data connected to health outcomes
  - Key partners
    - Anthem Blue Cross & Blue Shield Foundation
    - IAAAA Education Institute (501c3) related organization to IAAAA (501c6)
    - 15 Indiana AAAs
    - Indiana University Regenstrief Institute
    - Food suppliers
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# Partner Roles


- IAAAA Education Institute
  - Master agreement with Anthem Foundation
  - Sub agreements with local AAAs
  - Statewide program management and reporting
  - Implementation manual
  - Claims processing
- Indiana AAAs
  - Flexible local program design and management with the same statewide participant goal
    - Consume two additional ½ cup servings of fresh produce every day
  - Recruit and enroll current meal program participants
  - Procure and distribute food
  - Collect and report data
- Indiana University Regenstrief Institute
  - Database creation and management
  - Data analysis
- Food suppliers
- Food distribution
- DME provider
  - Contract for scales and blood pressure monitors



# Outputs and Outcomes

- Branded statewide as "Produce for Better Health"
  - 2,619 participants enrolled since January 2023
    - 1,881 current participants
    - 25.0% disenrollment over life of program
  - 76 of 92 Indiana counties reached (>82% of state)
  - Delivered since February 2023
    - 34,623 packages
    - 1.6 million ½ cup servings
    - 388,911 pounds of food
  - Meaningful outcomes
    - Statistically significant reductions in weight, blood pressure and nutrition risk score
    - Anecdotal improvements in individual health monitoring and proactive engagement with health care providers
  - AAA engagement
    - Congregate meal sites
    - Healthy aging prevention programs
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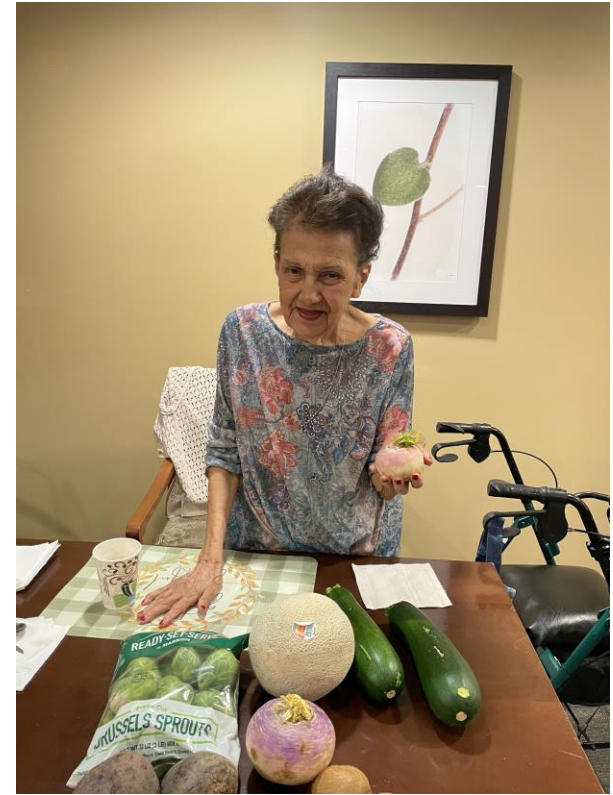
# Discussion

- If you have tried produce delivery programs at your AAA:
    - What were your successes and challenges?
    - What results did you document?
  - If you are thinking about starting a program at your AAA:
    - Who do you think are your key partners?
    - What do you think your biggest challenges will be?
  - What else would you like to know about Indiana's Produce for Better Health Program?
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# Produce Photos

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# Client Photos

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# Contact Information



## Speak with a AAA:

Chelsea Neulieb: [cneulieb@cicoa.org](mailto:cneulieb@cicoa.org)

Allie Overett: [aoverett@cicoa.org](mailto:aoverett@cicoa.org)

George Hawthorne: [ghawthorne@realservices.org](mailto:ghawthorne@realservices.org)

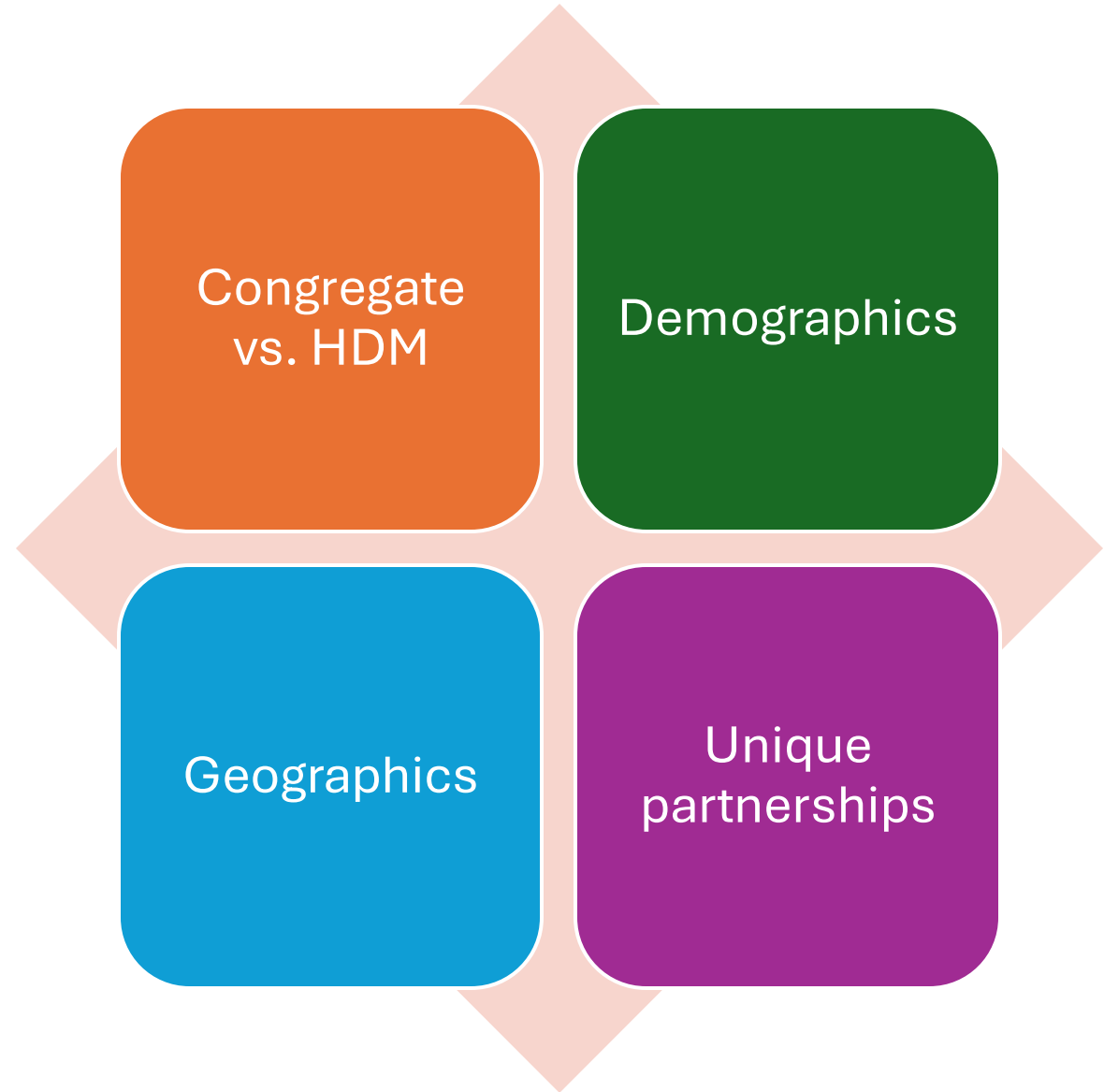
Stacey Kahre: [skahre@vinu.edu](mailto:skahre@vinu.edu)



## For assistance with program design:

Kristen LaEace  
[klaeace@iaaaa.org](mailto:klaeace@iaaaa.org)

# Case Studies



# Case Study 1 – Program Planning

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- Whom will we serve?
  - Congregate, HDM or both?
- Staffing
  - Who does what?
- Purchasing
  - What to purchase and how much?
  - Purchase product or partner for free product?
  - Sourcing blood pressure monitors and scales
- Packaging
  - In-house packaging or outside source?
  - Where will we package the product?
  - Will staff or volunteers package the product?
- Who will deliver the boxes?
  - Staff, volunteers or hired service?



# In-House Packing



# Case Study 1 – Program Planning

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- Creating paperwork
- Training and education
  - Staff on blood pressure monitors & scales
  - Participants
  - Host sites
- Policy questions
  - What if participants refuse to follow requirements?
  - Should we set a cap on participation?
  - How many locations will we serve?
  - When do we expand and where?
- Review over and over - what did we miss?
- Participant feedback



# Sample Marketing

## Produce for Better Health



**Do you like fresh fruits and vegetables?**



**Do you wish you had more of them every day?**



**Are you interested in trying new types of fruits and vegetables you might not have tasted before?**



**Are you 60+ years of age?**

**We invite you to join in the program!**

**At no cost to you, REAL Services, Inc. will deliver enough whole fruits and vegetables to you each month so you can have two additional servings per day.**

**We will also share great ideas with you on how to prepare them so they are tasty and satisfying.**

**To learn more: call (574) 284-7132 or email [healtheducation@realservices.org](mailto:healtheducation@realservices.org)**



1151 S. Michigan St. | South Bend, IN 46601  
[www.realservices.org](http://www.realservices.org) | (574) 233-8205

REAL Services, Inc., believing in the dignity of all people, will provide services without regard to race, age, color, religion, sex, gender identity, disability, national origin, ancestry, political affiliation or belief, familial status or status as a veteran.

## Case Study 2

- 8 county area
  - Urban, suburban and rural
- Year 1: 16 of 23 congregate meal sites
  - Property managers, service/activity coordinators, volunteers
- Year 2: HDM roll-out
  - Food bank partners
  - Logistics partners
- Innovations
  - Voicemail phone line for measurements
  - Care manager involvement
  - DocuSign electronic signatures

# Sample Items



**CICOA Produce for Better Health**

**Box Delivery Information**

**Time: 9AM-5PM**

**Schedule: Every other Tuesday**

**Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Questions? Call 317-803-6070**



# Durable Medical Equipment



# Sample Marketing



## Produce For Better Health Program

### Eligibility Criteria:

- ❑ Must be a participant in a CICOA lunch meal site or in the home-delivered meal program.

### Participant Requirements:

- ❑ Enrollment application
- ❑ Baseline health survey
- ❑ Quarterly satisfaction survey
- ❑ Monthly blood pressure and weight measurements

*CICOA will provide a blood pressure cuff and scale for you, at no cost, for your use.*

### Goals of the program:

- ❑ Help seniors get fruits and veggies year-round.
- ❑ Lower the risk of chronic diseases, such as diabetes and high blood pressure.
- ❑ Increase education of the importance of fruits and vegetables as part of a balanced diet.

### What kind of produce will I get?

#### Types:

A rotating assortment of seasonal fruits and vegetables.

#### Quantity:

Enough whole fruit and vegetables each month so you can have two additional servings per day.



## Questions or ready to enroll?

Call the CICOA Meals & More Department at 317-803-6042 with questions.

# Sample Nutrition Education

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## PINEAPPLE



**Storage Tips:** Whole pineapple should be left at room temperature in a dark place until ripe - about 3 days. Once ripe, cut and enjoy. After slicing, place in fridge in an airtight container.

**Nutrition Benefits:** One cup of pineapple contains almost 100% of the daily value of vitamin C and manganese. Vitamin C is essential for immune health, iron absorption, and growth and development, while manganese is an antioxidant that aids in growth and metabolism.

**How to cut:** Remove top and bottom with a large chef's knife. Slice from top to bottom along the sides to remove outer rind. Cut away eyes/spikes, then cut flesh along the tough, inner core. Discard core, then slice/cut pineapple into desired shapes (chunks, wedges, spears, etc.).

## 5 WAYS TO ENJOY PINEAPPLE



1) Enjoy fresh, sliced pineapple as a mid-day snack.

2) Juice it! Blend fresh pineapple with water and pour over ice.

3) Grill pineapple and enjoy on pizza or burgers.

4) Add finely chopped pineapple to baked goods like muffins and cakes.

5) Mix into salsa for a fresh twist on fish, tacos, or chicken!



Visit [GleanersNutritionHub.org](https://GleanersNutritionHub.org) for more recipe ideas and cooking tips!

## PINEAPPLE FRIED RICE

recipe



### Ingredients:

- 1 pineapple
- 3 tablespoons oil
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup cooked rice
- 1 cup mixed vegetables
- 2 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce

### Instructions:

1. Slice pineapple down the middle vertically and scoop out center to create a "bowl". Chop removed pineapple into small pieces for later.
2. In large skillet, heat 2 tablespoons oil and add eggs. Stir until almost fully cooked, then push to one side of pan.
3. Add 1 tablespoon oil, garlic, and onion and stir until fragrant.
4. Add rice, vegetables, 1/2 cup chopped pineapple, and soy sauce and cook until rice is slightly brown and vegetables are cooked.
5. Serve in empty pineapple shells. Top with chicken or shrimp if desired.

Serves 3: nutrition per serving (1 cup): 300 calories, 17 g fat, 29 g carbs, 3.5 g fiber, 9 g protein, 400 mg sodium

# Distribution Photos



# Challenges, Barriers and Lessons Learned

- Inflation spike over original cost assumptions
  - Roll-out took longer than anticipated
    - Delivery partner challenges
    - Staffing and administrative costs
    - Buy-in from congregate site staff for support
  - Ongoing reporting consistency
    - 4 oz serving by volume, not weight
  - Procurement and packaging
    - Whole foods vs. pre-cut
  - Delivery
  - Participant compliance
    - Not picking up boxes
    - Reporting health data
  - Participant Disenrollment
    - Voluntary: too much food, program hassle
    - Involuntary: leaving meal program, program compliance
  - Additional funding to extend life of program
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# Meaningful Results

- Increased participant engagement
  - Congregate site participation
  - Trying new foods
  - Cooking more often
  - Learning about nutrition
  - Sharing recipes
  - Ongoing health monitoring
- Connection to primary care providers
- Improved health indicators
  - Weight loss
  - Lower blood pressure
  - Lower nutrition risk score
  - Medication reduction
- Decreased food insecurity
  - Financial savings in food budget
  - Increased access to fresh produce



# Statistically Significant Population Results

- Improvement in self-reported blood pressure, weight and nutrition risk score over six months
  - Reported decline in systolic blood pressure is associated with a clinically meaningful 10.0% lower risk for major CVD events
  - Those who reported eating all the delivered produce had a lower blood pressure than those who reported eating a little
  - Upcoming Analyses
    - Improvements for persons with at least one year of participation
    - Pull of participant data from Indiana Health Information Exchange (*viability of data set TBD*)
      - Diagnoses, ED visits, hospital admits, community longevity, etc.
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# Success Story – Mary Ellen



- Mary gets produce boxes every two weeks from her AAA. She cuts the veggies into salads and loves the fresh fruit.
- Mary Ellen has lost over 25 pounds, lowered her blood pressure, and ditched her wheelchair over the past two years.

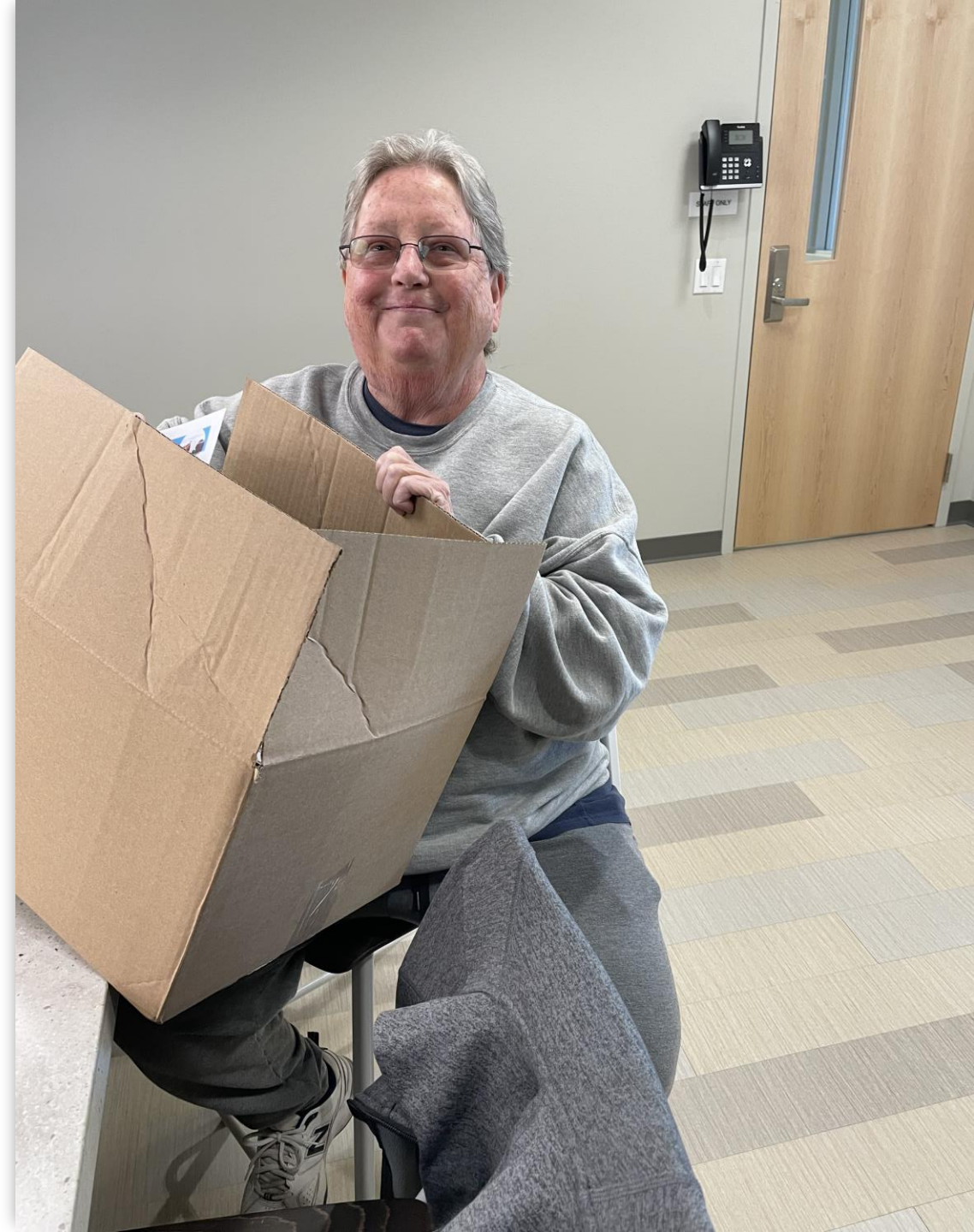


# Success Story - Diana

“When I started this program last year, I was pre-diabetic and on metformin. The last two doctor visits, my A1c dropped below the high range.

Since my A1c has dropped to around 5.2%, my doctor took me off metformin and told me that I am no longer pre-diabetic.

The only thing different I have been doing is eating more fresh fruits and vegetables. Since on this program, I have been able to sometimes eat two vegetables with my meals”



# PBH Across the State

*Multiple participants identified high blood pressure, connected with health care providers and are now controlled with medication*

- "I finally went to the doctor! I haven't been in years."*
- "This program has helped me lower my blood sugar"*
- "PBH has helped a lot with my monthly food budget, and I have better choices for snacks during the day"*
- "I am eating a variety of vegetables I usually can't afford"*
- "I am eating better because the program has introduced me to a lot of fruit and vegetables that I would never try if it wasn't in my box of goodies that I get every two weeks"*
- "I have lost weight, my numbers are down and I feel good"*
- "This really helps me eat more healthy; I don't have to really think about it"*

