

LA PLATA COUNTY FOOD PLAN



AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

Awareness campaigns are used to gain public support for a particular issue that an organization or group seeks to resolve or get behind. Typically, the campaign is a comprehensive effort between multiple partners and includes different forms of outreach through formal communication, social media, branding, and overall mission of a particular group or organization. A campaign speaks to targeted audiences and seeks out a specific change in action. Awareness campaigns bring visibility and attention to a specific cause. If used as a call to action, awareness campaigns can assist in behavior change both at individual and societal levels.



Awareness is only one piece of the puzzle and needs actions to go with it. Comprehensive tools used to inform and educate the public include multiple components (i.e. messaging, grassroots outreach, media relations, government affairs, budget, etc.) to help reach a specific goal.

BENEFITS

- Influence decision-makers
- Increase support and knowledge for the community
- Allow for word-of-mouth marketing and discussion about the issue
- Improve message reach to community
- Create partnerships and support
- Represent brand and mission regionally
- Establish personal, organization, and community value
- Generate a measurable difference in the community

CHALLENGES

- Failing to reach audiences and change actions
- Addressing goals beyond increased understanding
- Providing limited information and lack of actionable options
- Reducing individuals desire for change
- Causing harm and backlash if conducted inappropriately
- Wasting resources, time, and funding
- Lacking research-based information before launching
- Misdirecting focus and audience

Campaigns can be used to ensure that healthy, appropriate food is accessible to all populations. Focus groups showcased a need to “build awareness of local food and cultural practices could occur through festivals and more engagement at farmers markets.”

Schools are also using awareness campaign programs to teach children about where their food comes from and how food choices impact their bodies, the environment, and their communities. This can include increasing understanding of where to find culturally relevant, local food.

Focus groups also highlighted areas of interest around land: “Land access and land connections could help connect between interested farmers and land owners...building awareness of this gap and need could help guide and create a model for the future.” Partnering with decision makers and political officials is a critical aspect of building awareness around a topic area, and can help lead to change in areas such as land access. Effective campaigns can enhance the broader community awareness for an issue or goal, to leverage support and influence, and make change.

Stimulating economic opportunities for farmers, food businesses, and tertiary businesses is an outcome of awareness campaigns. An example of this at work is the organization Slow Money. They started in 2009 and have now worked to fund \$100 million to more than 1000 small organic farms through various activities across communities. A future opportunity may include initiatives that increase financial capital for local food procurement. For example, focus groups brainstormed “adopting a sugary drink tax, where funds would be dedicated to local food incentives.”



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