



PREPARING FOR COOKING MATTERS™



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This toolkit was prepared by Indy Hunger Network through the support of Indiana University Sustainable Food Systems Science and the Center for Rural Engagement.

INDY HUNGER NETWORK

Indy Hunger Network (IHN) is a coalition of hunger relief partners in the Greater Indianapolis area working to ensure that all who are hungry can access the nutritious food they need. It has been a great pleasure for IHN to work with IU on creating this toolkit. We are hopeful that other organizations throughout the state of Indiana find this toolkit helpful in building their own sustainable Cooking Matters programs.



INDIANA UNIVERSITY SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS SCIENCE

Sustainable Food Systems Science at Indiana University studies the social dimensions of food sustainability including culture, equity and justice in food provisioning from local to global. In Indiana, and in research sites around the world, we examine the production, coordination, and consumption of food value chains and the supporting networks and decision-making from individual to organizational levels. Our engaged research and advocacy for innovative solutions center on the promotion of human thriving.

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The Indiana University Center for Rural Engagement improves the lives of Hoosiers through collaborative initiatives that discover and deploy scalable and flexible solutions to common challenges facing rural communities. Working in full-spectrum community innovation through research, community-engaged teaching and student service, the center builds vision, harnesses assets and cultivates sustainable leadership structures within the communities with which it engages to ensure long-term success.

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Table of Contents

Cooking Matters Overview	4
Data Reports & Community Impacts	5
How to Get Started	6
Commitments & Responsibilities	7
Curriculums	8
Volunteers	9
Volunteer Phone Screening	11
Site Locations	12
Participants	13
Kitchen Inventory.....	15
Course Implementation	16
Budget	18
Sustainability	20
Testimonies	20
Resources	21
Web-Based Resources	22
References	22
Appendix	23

About the toolkit

This toolkit was created by Indy Hunger Network (IHN) to be a supplement to the provided guidelines from Cooking Matters. The toolkit specifically focuses on ways IHN has successfully implemented and expanded the Cooking Matters program. IHN has been a partner with Cooking Matters since 2015. Throughout the time working with Cooking Matters, IHN has found ways to adapt the Cooking Matters program to best fit the needs of the IHN community while still adhering to Cooking Matters' standards. All entities offering Cooking Matters programming through their organization must be approved by Cooking Matters at a national level before implementing any programming.

If you have questions or comments about IHN's Cooking Matters Program or the toolkit, please contact:

Megan Gendig
megan@indyhunger.org
cookingmatters@indyhunger.org

COOKING MATTERS OVERVIEW

Cooking Matters is a campaign of Share Our Strength, an organization working to end hunger and poverty. Community organizations form a partnership with the Cooking Matters program, and then partner organizations implement the Cooking Matters program in their community by offering Cooking Matters courses. The Cooking Matters courses are culinary and nutrition education classes that focus on how to shop for and cook healthy, affordable meals. Each Cooking Matters course is a 6-week program, and there are signature Cooking Matters courses for specific target audiences including parents, kids, families, teens, and child care professionals. Cooking Matters also reaches a diverse population of low-income families, many of whom are on federal assistance programs such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

Why is Cooking Matters needed?

Food-insecure households have to prioritize other expenses over food such as transportation, housing, and medical care. This makes it difficult to purchase all the food a household needs. Also, a gap often exists between the desire of low-income households to eat healthfully and their capacity to consistently prepare healthy meals. This makes the perceived cost of healthy foods a barrier for food-insecure households.¹ The Cooking Matters program can overcome this barrier by empowering participants to adopt strategic shopping and cooking skills that allow them to purchase and eat healthy food with a very limited budget.

Who is the target population for the Cooking Matters program?

Cooking Matters partners must focus their programming on the priority audience of parents and caregivers of children ages 0-5. Also, most Cooking Matters participants are low-income. A standard definition of low-income is that the participant's household income is less than 185 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. Partners do not need to verify the income level of each participant but should use proxy measures to be sure they are serving low-income participants. Refer to "[Participants](#)" on page 13 to see how site coordinators use proxy measures to recruit participants. Cooking Matters participants are also

often receiving benefits from SNAP, WIC, or other food assistance programs.

Participants at a Cooking Matters for Families class

IHN's Adaptation: The Cooking Matters program at the national level does not allow partners to verify participants' income levels, so it can be difficult to determine whether participants are low-income. IHN relies on the expertise of the site coordinators, who work closely with the participant population, to recruit participants who they know fit the Cooking Matters target population. IHN also expands on Cooking Matters' guidelines to recruit participants who may not be parents and caregivers of children ages 0 to 5. This includes allowing grandparents, aunts, uncles, and seniors to enroll in the classes. Ultimately, IHN tries to enroll about 40-50% of the participants within the target population in each class. See "[Participants](#)" on page 13 for more information.

Is my organization a good fit for the Cooking Matters program?

The Cooking Matters program partners with organizations across the country to implement the program in their communities. Cooking Matters partner organizations include but are not limited to community centers, faith-based organizations, food banks and pantries, SNAP offices and SNAP-Ed implementing agencies, and more. As mentioned above, Cooking Matters focuses on providing culinary and nutrition education to empower families to maximize their food resources and cook healthy meals. If your organization focuses on helping low-income families make healthy, affordable food choices, then Cooking Matters is a great program for your organization to implement.

Cooking Matters in Indiana

Many Indiana based organizations implement the Cooking Matters program. Examples include hospitals, nonprofits, YMCAs, Boys and Girls Club, and community centers. Below are three specific examples of Cooking Matters organizations in Indiana.

Indy Hunger Network

Organization type: nonprofit

Population: urban communities

IHN decided to partner with Cooking Matters by surveying the Indianapolis community and identifying the needs of the community. Based on the results of the community-based survey, IHN discovered that a large percentage of the surveyed population found preparing healthy meals for their family was difficult. This made it evident that the Cooking Matters program would be a great fit for the community. For more information, please visit their website at <https://www.indyhunger.org/>.

Lost River Market and Deli

Organization type: deli and grocery store

Population: rural communities

Lost River Market and Deli is a friendly, local, community-owned grocery store and deli located in the heart of Orange County, Paoli, Indiana. Lost River specializes in healthy, local, and organic products and implements initiatives to make healthy, local food accessible to community members across the socioeconomic spectrum. Lost River's initiatives include a produce prescription collaboration with local healthcare providers paired with cooking classes that follow the Cooking Matters model. This model allows health care providers in the community to refer patients to the Cooking Matters program. For more information about Lost River, please visit their website at <https://www.lostrivermarketanddeli.com/calendar>.



Lost River's fresh, local produce for purchase

Margaret Mary Health

Organization type: hospital

Population: rural communities

Margaret Mary Health is a not-for-profit critical access hospital providing inpatient and outpatient services. Margaret Mary Health is in Batesville, Indiana, and serves a population of more than

65,000 residents in Ripley, Franklin, and surrounding counties. Additionally, Margaret Mary Health implements community programs and initiatives that promote healthier lifestyles, including Cooking Matters classes offered at the hospital. For more information about Margaret Mary Health, please visit their website at <https://www.mmhealth.org/cooking-matters/>.

DATA REPORTS & COMMUNITY IMPACTS

Data reports from Cooking Matters at the national level and from IHN will allow your organization to have a better understanding of how the Cooking Matters program can impact your community.

Cooking Matters National Data

Data from the 2014 Cooking Matters long-term evaluation report:⁴

The Cooking Matters long-term evaluation report assessed the extent to which knowledge and attitudes were improved during the Cooking Matters program and whether behavior changes resulting from the program are maintained over time.² Here is the list of key changes made by families who participated in the Cooking Matters course after they completed the program:

- More confident in their cooking abilities and see fewer barriers to making healthy, affordable meals
- Making healthier and more budget-friendly meals, even six months after they finish the course
- Eating more vegetables, including non-fried options and green salad
- Reaching for low-sodium options 11 percent more often, low-fat dairy nine percent more often, and lean protein and whole grains eight percent more often
- More confident that they will be able to afford enough food
- Before the course, families "sometimes" worried that food might run out each month; six months later, they "rarely" worried about this.
- More confident that they can stretch their food dollars

Indy Hunger Network Data

IHN evaluated the Cooking Matters program since the start of the programming in 2017. Below are the summarized outcomes of each Cooking Matters course curriculum. (To learn more about curriculums, see [page 8](#)). The summarized results were compiled by a statistician who volunteers with Cooking Matters.

Course Curriculum	Site 1
Cooking Matters for Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of the participants were female, over the age of 40, with some or more college education, and Black. 45 percent were using food pantries at the beginning of the course. There was significant growth in confidence in their cooking abilities. There was significant growth in the ability to purchase healthy food on a budget and help family members and themselves make healthy food decisions.
Cooking Matters for Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of the participants were Black women who were 39 years of age or younger, with at least some college education. There was significantly less frustration about cooking, including feelings that it takes too much time or work. There was significantly more confidence with choosing low sodium options, eating each food group, and choosing healthier options. There was significantly more confidence in their abilities to budget with food.
Cooking Matters for Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of the participants were female, between the ages of 30 and 39 years old, with some or more college. 14.5 percent were using food pantries at the beginning of the course, and 10.8 percent were using WIC. There was significant growth in their confidence surrounding food choices. These areas include eating all food groups per day, confidence in choosing healthy foods, and choosing the best-priced options of healthy foods. There was significant growth in families planning and preparing meals together.

HOW TO GET STARTED

There are many ways to implement the Cooking Matters program in your community. To give you an idea of how to do so, IHN has provided a to-do list of what they did to successfully implement the program in the Indianapolis community.

- 1. Research:** Research the Cooking Matters program. A great place to start is going to the Cooking Matters website (<https://cookingmatters.org/>) to learn more about the program. Having a foundation of knowledge about the program will help you determine if the program best suits your organization and the community your organization serves.
- 2. Cooking Matters Partnership Application:** Apply to be a Cooking Matters partner by completing the Cooking Matters [Partnership Application](#).³ It is important to note that there are certain times of the year that Cooking Matters approves partnerships. Make sure to check the deadlines for the application.
- 3. Identify Site Locations:** A great way to start promoting the program is to identify potential site locations to host Cooking Matters courses. Site locations will help you find a target population and space to have the classes. Refer to ["Site Locations" on page 12](#) to see more information about how to identify and partner with a site location.
- 4. Program Budget:** Establish a program budget. Your organization will need to determine whether your organization or your site location will be responsible for course funds. If your organization is paying for the program, make sure to either apply for grant funding or have the money in place to implement programming. For more information about budget planning, refer to ["Budget" on page 18](#).
- 5. Estimate the Number of Courses:** Determine how many courses your organization would like to offer for the year. Developing a plan and a schedule for your projected courses will help ensure your organization will have an adequate amount of staff and/or volunteers to implement the program.
- 6. Volunteer and/or Staff Recruitment:** Be sure that you have volunteers and/or staff that can effectively help you with the program. Refer to ["Volunteers" on page 9](#).

7. **Mobile Kitchens:** Having access to a fully functional kitchen is critical to the success of the Cooking Matters program. If your host site does not have a suitable kitchen setup available for your program use, your organization will need a mobile kitchen. Refer to [“Kitchen Inventory” on page 15](#).
8. **Start Your Classes:** You are now ready to begin scheduling programming. Please keep in mind that starting slowly with classes is the best way to begin. Once you have completed one course, you will have a better feel for what goes into each class.



Food supplies and ingredients for a class

COMMITMENTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

When your organization partners with Cooking Matters, your organization should understand the responsibilities of the partnership. These responsibilities are also listed in the Cooking Matters [Partnership Application](#)³ which is helpful to review when determining your commitment to the program.

1. **Program Coordination:** Cooking Matters partner organizations must designate one person to be the program coordinator and serve as the primary contact for the program. This person will be responsible for coordinating and implementing the program, recruiting participants, making weekly reminder phone calls or emails for classes, and being present throughout the six-week duration of classes. Other responsibilities include reviewing and signing the Partnership Agreement and attending a live, one-hour Cooking Matters update webinar every three months. Program coordinators are also responsible for the program goals which include determining the

number of participants planned to be reached, the number of classes anticipated to be held for the year, and the number of participants who are in the target population for the program. Program coordinators can be a volunteer or staff member. Refer to [“Course Implementation” on page 16](#) for more information about program coordinators.

2. **Training:** Before implementing the program and receiving program materials from Cooking Matters at the national level, the program coordinator and new volunteers are required to attend an on-boarding training webinar. Also, the program coordinators and volunteers must complete the Cooking Matters online course and/or tour training and pass the associated assessments.
3. **Reporting:** Partners must record program information, including course dates, location, and participant and graduate numbers into Salesforce within one week after each course ends.
4. **Ordering Materials:** Partners order materials from the Cooking Matters Salesforce database.
5. **Recruitment:** Partners must recruit the intended audience and volunteers for the program and communicate expectations. Refer to [“Volunteers” on page 9](#) and [“Participants” on page 13](#) for more information.
6. **Financial:** A partnership with Cooking Matters is free. However, Cooking Matters partners incur local Cooking Matters programming costs. Cooking Matters also offers grants for partner organizations, but these grants are not offered every year. Refer to [“Budget” on page 18](#) for more information.

How long do I have to partner with Cooking Matters?

Your organization can host as many Cooking Matters courses as you see fit. There is no set amount of classes an organization has to host. Your organization can host one class and decide Cooking Matters is not best suited for your organization. Your organization can cancel the partnership with Cooking Matters after completion of the first course.

IHN Adaptation: Since the start of the Cooking Matters partnership with IHN, IHN has changed the

number of classes implemented each year and has slowly grown the program over time. During the first year, IHN implemented a total of five courses. IHN took the time in between classes to recruit more site locations and volunteers, adapt strategies to make the next class better, and learn from other programs on how to expand the program. During year two, IHN expanded the program to have a goal of 25 courses per year. IHN now sets a yearly goal to do ten more classes than the previous year. IHN has a long term goal to host at least 100 courses per year.

CURRICULUMS

Cooking Matters provides a variety of curriculums to offer to different populations. The information below describes each curriculum and explains ways IHN has adapted each curriculum to best fit the needs of IHN and the community it serves.

Cooking Matters for Adults

This curriculum teaches low-income adults how to prepare and shop sensibly for healthy meals on a limited budget.

IHN Adaptation: IHN frequently hosts Cooking Matters for Adults classes at site locations for the target demographic. Several of the site locations where Cooking Matters for Adults is held are located in food deserts. This makes the program's grocery store tour difficult to execute. To accommodate this challenge, IHN has shortened the six-week course to five weeks, removing the grocery store tour. If your organization wants to include the grocery store tour in the course, you can organize a pop-up grocery store tour at the site location. IHN has also found difficulties getting participants to commit to the duration of the six-week program, so IHN also offers the course in four-week, five-week, or six-week formats. IHN has found that it is best to register 15 participants for the course instead of the recommended ten participants because typically only 60 percent of participants who sign up will attend the course.

Cooking Matters for Parents

This curriculum teaches low-income parents with young children how to prepare and shop sensibly for healthy meals on a limited budget.

IHN Adaptation: One major challenge IHN has found with the Cooking Matters for Parents program is

having parents that can commit to the full six-week course. To make this program more suitable for the parent population, IHN has shortened the six-week, two-hour classes course to four weeks with one-hour classes. IHN can successfully cover all of the curriculum material in this condensed format. IHN has also found the best site locations for the Cooking Matters for Parents are at Head Start and Early Learning education centers because parents have their kids in school at these locations, and the locations provide childcare. IHN plans the classes one hour before mandatory pick up time at the site locations, which allows parents to participate in the classes and then pick up their children immediately following the class. Children are allowed to come to the classes, but IHN does not recommend it. IHN has found that the presence of children can limit parent engagement during class time.

Cooking Matters for Families

This curriculum brings school-aged children and their families together to learn about healthy eating, planning meals as a family, and working together in the kitchen.

IHN Adaptation: Similar to Cooking Matters for Parents, IHN has shortened the six-week two-hour classes to four-week two-hour classes during the summer months. IHN can successfully cover all of the curriculum material in the condensed format. IHN does implement the six-week two-hour classes during the non-summer months. Also, Cooking Matters encourages parents of the families to actively participate during the classes. While this is only encouraged, IHN has found it to be vital to the success of the course, as parent participation helps keep their children engaged throughout the classes.



Participants after completion of a Cooking Matters course

Another useful tip IHN has found with Cooking Matters for Families classes is to have volunteers that understand the family dynamic. This allows volunteers to cater to the needs and challenges of the family that may arise during class time. Finally, IHN determines the capacity of the classes based on the number of heads in the room, not based on the number of families signed up for the class.

Cooking Matters for Teens

This curriculum teaches teens ages 13 to 18 how to prepare healthy recipes and make smart choices in school, shopping, or eating out.

IHN Adaptation: IHN has implemented Cooking Matters for Teens at several different locations and times such as during school hours, after school hours, and at a shelter for homeless youth. IHN has not found Cooking Matters for Teens to be easy or transformative for this population, as a majority of participants are not engaged with the material during the classes. Overall, IHN has found it difficult to tailor the curriculum to this age group.

Cooking Matters for Kids

This curriculum teaches children ages eight to 12 how to prepare healthy recipes independently and make smart choices.

IHN Adaptation: Similar to Cooking Matters for Parents and Families, IHN has found Cooking Matters for Kids to work best in a shortened format. IHN has shortened the course to one-hour classes for four-weeks. IHN can successfully cover all of the curriculum material in the condensed format. With the standard six-week two-hour programming, IHN finds it difficult to keep the attention of the children for the duration of the class. IHN has found the best site locations for Cooking Matters for Kids are at schools with aftercare programs or organizations with summer programs. During the classes, IHN incorporates a 30-minute activity after the one-hour class is complete. The activity includes food in some way such as relay races with a fruit or vegetable or playing vegetable tag by naming a vegetable before you can tag a person. After the course, IHN buys mini, single-person blenders for the kids as their incentives.

Cooking Matters at the Store

Cooking Matters at the Store provides adults with hands-on education as they shop for food. Participants learn how to plan and budget for healthy, affordable, and delicious meals for their families. A version of the Cooking Matters at the Store tour is also available for WIC participants.

IHN Adaptation: IHN has not implemented this curriculum because IHN has not found where it can fit in with the population at the current time.

Cooking Matters at the Store- Pop Up Workshop

Cooking Matters at the Store-Pop Up is brought right to the site location. This is a good option that eliminates the need for transportation to a different site and provides a quiet and convenient space to learn and have discussions. Also, Cooking Matters at the Store-Pop Up is great for site locations located in food deserts.

IHN Adaptation: IHN uses the format and set up for Cooking Matters at the Store-Pop Up Workshop in place of grocery store tours that are not able to be implemented. Grocery store tours are typically unable to be included in the course curriculum at site locations in food deserts.

Can Cooking Matters partners change the format of the six-week course?

The best practice is to not change the format of the six-week course. However, with prior approval from the Cooking Matters staff, partners may be able to change the format. If IHN does change the format of the six-week course, it is important to note that IHN still covers all of the curriculum material in the condensed format.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are essential to the success of the Cooking Matters program and ensure your organization can effectively implement courses throughout the year. Here are ways to recruit and maintain strong volunteers to successfully run the Cooking Matters program.

How many volunteers do I need for each class, and what are their roles?

Each class will have three volunteers: a culinary instructor, a nutrition instructor, and an assistant. The roles of each volunteer are as follows:

- 1. Culinary volunteers** combine their knowledge and experience with the lesson plans and recipes provided in the Cooking Matters curriculum. Culinary volunteers are usually graduates of or enrolled in a two-year culinary training program, have at least two years of experience working as a cook or chef, or are retired cooks or chefs. Culinary volunteers can also be people who genuinely love cooking and have acquired teaching skills; they do not need to be professional chefs.
- 2. Nutrition instructors** use the lesson plans and instructional materials provided in the Cooking Matters curriculum, along with their expertise in nutrition to teach nutrition education to the participants. Nutrition volunteers are typically graduates of or enrolled in dietetics programs, have at least two years working in a nutrition and dietetics position, or retired in the field of nutrition and dietetics.
- 3. Assistants** help before, during, and after classes. Duties may include shopping for food, handing out and collecting class materials, engaging reluctant participants, helping with setting up and cleaning up, taking photos, or collecting stories during class to help record the Cooking Matters course experience.

How to find the right volunteers

Finding the right volunteers is key to the success of the Cooking Matters program. IHN has found the program to be most successful when consistent volunteers commit to volunteer for an entire course or more. This allows the culinary instructor, nutrition instructor, and assistant to have a good workflow from week to week. It can be difficult for volunteers to commit to an entire course, so this is not a requirement for volunteering. Here are ways IHN has been successful at recruiting great volunteers for the program.

- 1. Target recruitment:** Target volunteer recruitment in areas where you can find people with the skills and experiences needed for each

role. This can help ensure that volunteers will be successful in their roles. For example, you may ask faculty or staff at a local university or college to promote the nutrition volunteer role to dietetics and/or nutrition students.

- 2. Phone screenings:** Once you receive interest from potential volunteers, it is helpful to have a phone call to discuss the skills needed for the role and the expectations for volunteering. This will help determine whether the volunteer will be a good fit for the program and your organization. Phone screenings typically take 30 minutes. See [“Volunteer Phone Screening” on page 11](#) for more information.
- 3. Promote as “service learning hours”:** Using “service learning hours” in your volunteer recruitment language can help find volunteers who are passionate about working with Cooking Matters. This language helps eliminate people volunteering for the sole purpose of needing volunteer hours.
- 4. Volunteer flyer and social media outreach:** Volunteer flyers make it easy for potential volunteers to learn more about the program and understand volunteer roles and expectations. IHN likes to post volunteer information to specific social media platforms that target groups of people potentially interested in volunteering with Cooking Matters.
- 5. Volunteer Standards for Cooking Matters:** IHN developed a document called Volunteer Standards for Cooking Matters which allows IHN and volunteers to have a mutual understanding of expectations for volunteering. IHN found it necessary to create this document to prevent misunderstandings around what is expected by and from volunteers. See [“Appendix” on page 22](#) for the document.

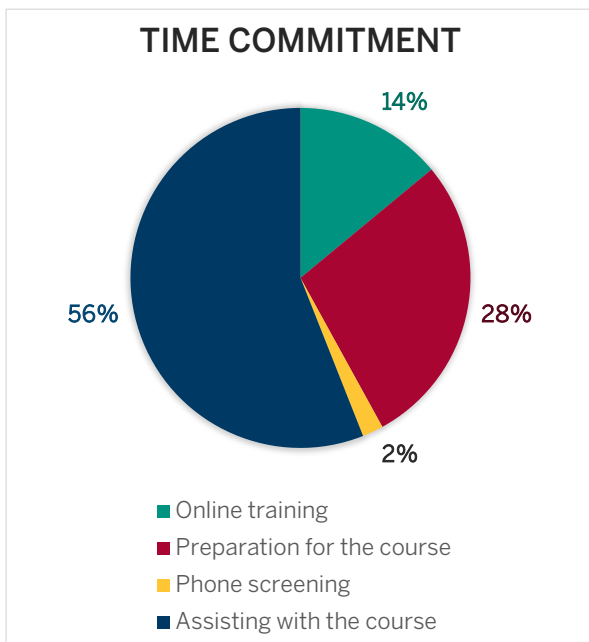
What is the time commitment for volunteering?

Based on IHN’s experience with Cooking Matters volunteers, the volunteer commitment includes:

- A 30-minute phone screening with IHN’s program coordinator. See the next section “Volunteer Phone Screening” for more details.
- Approximately three-hour online training provided by Cooking Matters. The training will

cover class material. Additionally, it covers class facilitation and the opportunity to lead an in-person practice class session.

- 60 minutes prep each week, which includes reviewing class materials from the Cooking Matters book.
- 30 minutes with setting up and 30 minutes of tearing down each class.
- Leading or assisting with a two-hour class once a week for six weeks if possible. Volunteers can schedule volunteer times for classes based on their availability.



VOLUNTEER PHONE SCREENING

The purpose of the phone screening is to give potential volunteers a better understanding of the program. This includes communicating with potential volunteers about skills needed for the role, expectations for volunteering, and determining whether they are a good fit for the program and your organization. Below is an outline of how IHN conducts the volunteer phone screening process.

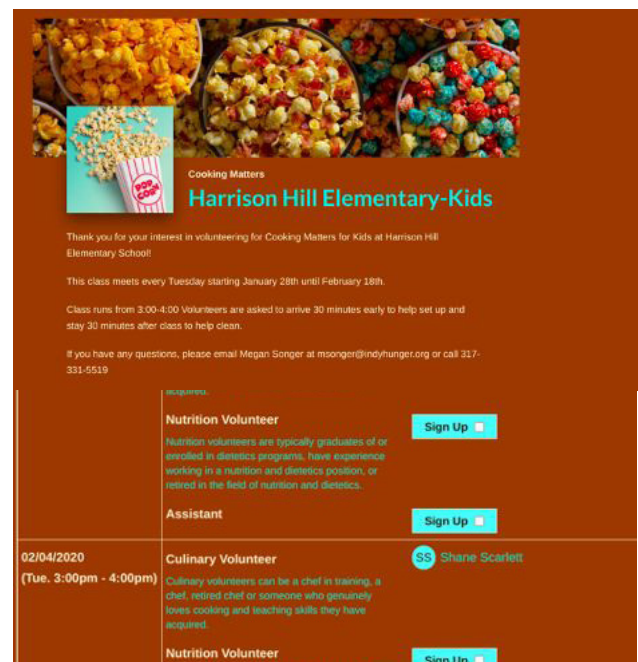
- 1. Get to know the volunteers:** Ask the volunteers to tell you about themselves and what made them interested in Cooking Matters. Thank them for their interest in volunteering.
- 2. Background information:** Give an overview of your organization and what your role is in the

Cooking Matters program. Tell them why your organization decided to implement Cooking Matters and give an overview of the courses.

- 3. Explain the three volunteer positions:** Give an overview of the volunteer roles and ask the volunteers what roles interest them.
- 4. Next steps:** Provide them with information about how you will follow up with them about volunteering. IHN typically sends a follow-up email to well-suited volunteers that include information about completing online training and the link to Sign Up Genius to volunteer for classes.

How do volunteers sign up for Cooking Matters classes?

IHN uses Sign-Up Genius (<https://www.signupgenius.com>) to allow volunteers to sign up for classes. IHN has found that Sign-Up Genius is the most user-friendly platform for IHN volunteers, but there are many platforms to choose from to allow volunteers to sign up for classes. Please see the screenshots below for examples of how volunteers sign up for classes on Sign-Up Genius. The example below shows the Cooking Matters course being hosted at a site location called Harrison Hill Elementary. The volunteers have the option to sign up for different scheduled classes and to sign up for the different volunteer roles: culinary volunteer, nutrition volunteer, or assistant.



Example of the Sign-Up Genius page used to sign up volunteers for classes

What if I do not have three volunteers?

Cooking Matters encourages having at least three volunteers plus the program coordinator present at each class. It is not always possible, however, to have all the volunteers at each class, and IHN has successfully run a Cooking Matters course with a seasoned program coordinator and at least one volunteer present. If there is only one person able to lead the class—whether the program coordinator or a volunteer—it will be extremely difficult to successfully implement the program, and the class should be canceled. It is best to try to recruit enough volunteers to have three volunteers and the program coordinator present at each class.

At what point do I cancel a class if I don't have enough volunteers?

If IHN decides to cancel a class, IHN gives volunteers at least a two-hour notice on the day of the class. IHN always has a staff or volunteer person on call if there are no-show volunteers or if volunteers cannot make it last minute. If IHN does not have any volunteers signed up through Sign-up Genius one week before a scheduled class series, IHN cancels the first class of the series and continues to look for volunteers. If IHN does not gain any volunteers, they cancel the entire six-week course.



A Cooking Matters volunteer leading a class

SITE LOCATIONS

How do I establish site locations to host courses?

There are many ways to go about finding new sites for the Cooking Matters program. Here are the steps IHN has found to be most effective to start a new partnership with a site location.

- 1. Research potential sites** for your community within your target demographics and zip code. Community centers, faith-based organizations, and food banks are examples of great location sites. These location sites are easily accessible to the community, can hold cooking classes, and have the necessary facilities including restrooms, handwashing stations, etc.
- 2. Contact site location once the site is identified.** Introduce yourself and the Cooking Matters program. If possible, meet with a person from the organization for coffee. It allows you to connect with the site coordinator on a more personal level and gauge whether or not they will be a good fit to host a Cooking Matters course.
- 3. Conduct a site visit** at the site location if you determined the site to be a good fit. IHN learned early on that it is necessary to do a site visit to ensure the site has the proper space, equipment, and access to electricity. Site visits usually take about 15-20 minutes. During the site visits, IHN discusses where the class will be held in the facility, who will be the primary contact person, where the kitchen space is, if adequate electricity is available, and, and most importantly if there is a location to store the mobile kitchens safely. IHN has found that storing the kitchens on site is extremely beneficial during the entire programming to decrease the number of items being transported to and from class. For more information about mobile kitchens, see [“Kitchen Inventory” on page 15](#).
- 4. Have the site coordinator sign the Site Application and Agreement after the site visit is completed.** IHN developed the Site Application and Agreement to ensure that sites would keep their commitment to providing a clean and safe space, having a staff person on-site during class time, and understanding the rules within the agreement. [“Appendix” on page 22](#) for this document.

- 5. Host a pop-up cooking demonstration** at the site location before scheduling the first course. The purpose of the pop-up demonstration is to gain program interest from people in the community. While not a requirement, IHN strongly encourages the pop-up cooking demonstrations to prevent scheduling a program that no one is interested in attending. Cooking demonstrations work best at already scheduled events such as a Fall Festival at a local church or Back to School night at a school.

During a typical cooking demonstration, IHN prepares a meal that would be made in the Cooking Matters course. Once the demonstration is complete, IHN hands out samples. IHN uses this as an opportunity to recruit participants for the program by handing out flyers and information about the course. **After the cooking demonstration is complete, IHN is no longer responsible for recruiting participants. Site coordinators will be responsible for recruiting participants for the classes.** Participants will be in contact with the site coordinator about class details and questions. "[Participants](#)" on page 13 for more information.

- 6. Schedule a Cooking Matters course** at the site location if there is enough interest following the pop-up cooking demonstration. Again, the site coordinator is responsible for recruiting participants for the site. If there is not enough interest from the pop-up cooking demonstration, the program coordinator will ask if the site wants to go forward with scheduling a course or continue to promote the program at the site with flyers or other materials.

What are the site coordinator's responsibilities?

Site coordinators are responsible for:

- Recruiting participants for each class.
- Sending weekly reminders to participants at least 24 hours before the start of class.
- Attending each class in the course.
- Notifying the program coordinator about projected low attendance for a class or if anything interferes with a scheduled class.

What if site locations are unsuccessful?

There will be difficulties with programming at sites, whether it be that you do not have enough participants enrolled in the class, that participants don't show up for class, weather complications, or something else. You may also find that the program simply is not the right fit for the site location, or that site coordinators are not preparing well for classes. All of these situations should be entered into Salesforce to help identify why a class was canceled, delayed, or not followed as scheduled. You will not be penalized if a program does not go as planned.

Can I host courses at my organization?

Yes, absolutely. Classes can be held anywhere that fits the size and needs of the class you wish to hold. Due to limitations in the size of IHN's office, IHN does not hold classes at their physical location.



IHN has found the U-shaped classroom to be the most successful. It allows everyone to see the instructor while also allowing the group to feel together.

PARTICIPANTS

How to recruit participants

Cooking Matters at the national level recommends signing up eight to ten participants for each course. IHN has found that it is best to recruit 15 participants in each class because about 60% of the recruited participants show up for the class. IHN's process for recruiting participants is outlined below. This outline contains similar information found in "[Site Locations](#)" on page 12.

1. Research and contact potential site locations to find areas in the community that would benefit

from Cooking Matters classes. Once you have identified a potential site location, contact the site coordinator to discuss the next steps.

2. Schedule a cooking demonstration to gauge interest at the site location. Determine if the site location has scheduled events or times where your organization could reach a large group of people. If there is a scheduled event that works with your organization's availability, schedule a cooking demonstration during the event. Cooking demonstrations will allow your organization to get the word out about the program to potential participants and allow people to gain interest in the program.
3. Schedule a course and recruit participants if the cooking demonstration successfully showed a significant amount of interest. IHN has found that it works best for site coordinators to be in charge of participant recruitment, as site coordinators are more connected with participants. IHN provides site coordinators with a signup sheet, the typical participant qualifications, and answers to commonly asked questions. Site coordinators are required to give IHN a headcount of interested participants one week before class begins. IHN asks for a final headcount two days before the scheduled start of the class.

How do I determine if participants qualify for the program?

Qualification is a challenge, as Cooking Matters at the national level does not allow partners to verify participants' income levels. IHN works with site coordinators to help determine which people in a specific population will benefit from the program. For example, a site coordinator at a school may pull information on students who are on free and reduced lunch and offer information about the program to the families. If a site does not have access to this information, IHN uses this statement to qualify a participant: If someone can pay their bills and is not at or below the poverty level but may find it difficult to make ends meet, these people may also benefit from the program. IHN trusts the site coordinators to use their best judgment when registering participants. It is important to note that IHN's Cooking Matters program has not turned anyone away from the program.

As mentioned, the site coordinator recruits all participants for the Cooking Matters courses. IHN does use an interest form during their cooking demonstrations (refer to "[Site Locations](#)" on page 12 for more information) which is used to gauge interest at potential site locations. This form has changed frequently during IHN's partnership with Cooking Matters. Initially, the interest form included a question asking potential participants if they have or are currently using SNAP or other federal food assistance programs to see how many participants qualify (based on the national recommendation) for the program. IHN found that the question made people uncomfortable and less likely to complete the form, so IHN removed the question from the form. See "[Appendix](#)" on page 22 for the full-sized, editable version of the interest form.

**DO YOU SPEND TOO MUCH TIME WORRYING
WHAT'S FOR DINNER?
WE CAN HELP**

DATES: September 10th- October 15th
TIME: 5:30-7:30 pm
LOCATION: Harrison Hill Elementary School
7510 East 53rd Street,
Lawrence, IN 46226
RSVP: Neal Gore
nealgore@msdt.k12.in.us

FREE
6-week Cooking Matters Course

WHY SIGN UP
You want the best for your family, but time, money, and picky eaters can make it hard.

*"After Cooking Matters, I feel like I can cook anything. Now, every day that I open up my cabinets and refrigerator, I always see an easy dinner."
-Paula, single mom of 2*

INDY HUNGER network | COOKING MATTERS | NATIONAL SPONSOR Walmart

This program was partially funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Program as part of SNAP E.R. brought to you by Cooking Matters®. To find out more, contact 1-866-950-FOOD(3663).

The participant flyer is a resource created by Cooking Matters at the national level. IHN sends this flyer to site locations in a PDF format, so no alterations can be made.

KITCHEN INVENTORY

Your organization will need to purchase equipment to implement the Cooking Matters courses at the site location. Cooking Matters at the national level provides a suggested list of equipment your organization should purchase to successfully implement a course. IHN has found that there are additional materials we recommend be purchased for the courses. We would highly recommend building your kitchen as you build your program to best suit your organization. See the table below to find the suggested materials lists from both IHN and Cooking Matters at the national level.

IHN's Inventory List

Cooking Equipment

Large cutting boards (2)
Small cutting boards (11)
Oven mitts (3)
Medium-size bowl (3)
Large-size bowl (1)
Metal grater (1)
White plastic strainer (1)
Small stockpot with lid (1)
Small saucepan (1)
Large frying pan (1)
Glass casserole dish (1)
Baking sheet (1)
Cupcake pan (1)
Meat thermometer (1)
White Extension Cord (1)

Utensils

Rubber spatula (1)
Plastic spatula (1)
Metal spatula (1)
Plastic spoons (1 slotted)
Large metal spoon (1)
Ladle (1)
Metal whisk (1)
Rubber tongs (1)
Measuring spoons and cups (1)
Kitchen shears (1)
Large metal fork (1)
Can opener (2)
Vegetable peelers (2)
Liquid measuring cup (1)
Metal masher (1)
Pizza cutter (1)
Knives (10 for participants, 2 for the instructor)

Storage

Snack bags (1)
Quart size bags (1)

Gallon bags (1)
Sandwich bags (1)
Quart size bag with salt and pepper shaker (1)
Eating supplies
Stack of paper bowls (1)
Stack of small paper plates (1)
Stack paper plates (1)
Napkins (1)
Box of plastic forks (1)
Box of plastic knives (1)
Box of plastic spoons (1)

Safety

Foil (1)
Extra small gloves (1)
Small gloves (1)
Medium gloves (1)
Large or extra-large gloves (1)
Small first aid kit (1)

Cleaning supplies

Lysol wipes (1)
Dish soap
Wash clothes (3)
Kitchen towel (3)
Drying mat (1)

Other

Blue grippy mats (10+)
Cooking spray in a large gallon bag (1)
Cooking oil in a large gallon bag (1)
Folding/rolling cart
Sterilite tote
Pens
Cooking Matters binder for corresponding class

Cooking Matters National Inventory List

Cooking Equipment

Large cutting board (1)
Medium plastic demo cutting boards (2)
Flexible plastic cutting boards (15)
Oven mitt (1)
Potholders (2)
Nesting stainless steel mixing bowls (5)
Plastic colanders (2)
Stainless steel box grater (2)
Pots (3)
Pans (3)
Casserole dish (1)
Baking sheet (1)
Rolling pin (1)
Meat thermometer (1)
Kitchen timer (1)
Electric burner (1)
Butane cartridges (2)
Blender (1)
Extension Cord (1)

Utensils

Knives (20 piece set)
Knife roll or carry bag (1)
Knife guards (14)
Rubber spatula (2)
Wooden spoons (2)
Plastic slotted spoons (2)
Plastic mixing spoons (2)
Metal slotted spoons (2)
Metal mixing spoons (2)
Soup ladle (1)
Wire whisk (2)
Tongs (2)
Metal spatula (2)
Measuring cups (2 sets)
Measuring spoons (2 sets)
2-cup liquid measuring cup (1)
A hand can openers (2)

Vegetable peelers (3)

Storage

Plastic wrap (1)
Aluminum foil (1)
Wax paper (1)
Parchment paper (1)
Ziploc bags (1 box)
Large plastic bins with lids (2)
Compact rolling luggage cart (1)

Safety

Small disposable food safety gloves (1 box)
Medium disposable food safety gloves (1 box)
Cut-resistant glove (1)
First aid kit (1)

Eating supplies

Paper plates (1 package)
Disposable cups (1 package)
Napkins (1 package)
Disposable utensils (1 package)

Cleaning supplies

Paper towels (1 roll)
Cloth towels (3 sets)
Liquid dish soap (1)
Bleach counter cleaner (1)
Pot Scrubbers (1)
Sponges (1 package)
Trash bags (1 box)
Rubber gloves (1 set)
Hand soap (1)

Other

Pens/ dry erase markers (1-2 boxes)
Tape (1-2 rolls)
Calculator (1-2)
Folding Cart/Rolling Cart (1)

What is a mobile kitchen?

IHN hosts all Cooking Matters courses at off-site locations. Therefore, IHN transports its equipment in a mobile kitchen. Typically, IHN likes to store their mobile kitchen at the site location throughout the course. Your organization can host courses at your organization's facility or offsite locations. This will determine whether or not your organization will need to have a mobile kitchen to transport equipment to and from site locations.



Example of IHN's mobile kitchen

COURSE IMPLEMENTATION

Here is a brief overview of the planning that IHN uses in preparing a Cooking Matters course. Once your organization partners with Cooking Matters, Cooking Matters provides resources that include a comprehensive coordination guide with very specific information about what to do before, during, and after the course. Therefore, this list by IHN should be used only as a guide, and you should reference the official Cooking Matters guide when planning a Cooking Matters course.

Two months before the course

- Identify a community partner and talk to them about their goals for the course.
- Choose a date and time for your course.
- Choose the curriculum that best suits the host site.
- Determine the number of volunteers needed and begin recruitment.

One month before the course

- Begin recruiting course participants.
- Set up childcare, interpretation, and transportation if needed.
- Purchase needed course equipment and materials if you do not already have them.

Two weeks before the course

- Confirm necessary information with the site coordinator. This information includes:
- The site coordinator must enroll at least 15 participants. Make sure the site coordinator is comfortable with meeting this number and assist if not.
- Provide contact information for on-site staff personnel and volunteers for each week of class,
- Provide communication with the volunteers and site coordinators about necessary information, such as Cooking Matters staff phone numbers.
- Ensure all materials are printed, purchased, and ready for class.

One day before the course

- Run through the roles and responsibilities of all involved parties.
- Collect course materials and equipment.
- Remind participants about the course (this is the site coordinator's responsibility).
- Shop for/order groceries online. Please refer to the section regarding grocery procurement below.

Day of class

- Arrive 30 minutes early.
- Ensure all materials and foods needed are on hand before heading to the site.
- Greet volunteers, site coordinators, and participants.
- Assemble classroom set up.
- Wash all produce in advance.
- Assemble take-home grocery bags, if possible, before class begins. If not, collect reusable grocery bags when class begins and have volunteer assistant pack bags during class time.

End of class

- Clean up.

This list is adapted from the Cooking Matters Course Coordination Guide.

Grocery Store Procurement

The person responsible for procuring groceries for the Cooking Matters classes can vary depending on what is easiest for your organization. This role can be fulfilled by a program coordinator or a volunteer. IHN receives food from both community partners and grocery store purchases. Additionally, if a site location has a garden, IHN will procure food from the garden to include during the classes. IHN always orders food the day before classes, so the food can be ready to pick up on the day of the class. It is also important to have a volunteer on hand at each class who can bring food to the classes if any food items are forgotten or there is not enough food.

Do I need a full-time staff member to implement programming?

A full-time staff member is not required to implement the Cooking Matters program. The program can be run by volunteers, and the program coordinators can be volunteers or staff members from your organization. When IHN first implemented the program, an AmeriCorps VISTA was leading the program and worked under IHN's Managing Director. After the second year of the program with the AmeriCorps VISTA still leading the program, IHN realized they needed to grow their staff with the growth of the program. IHN hired a full time Cooking Matters Program Manager to facilitate the program. Also, IHN onboarded two Americorps VISTAs to help implement the program and to work with the Cooking Matters Program Manager. IHN has found that one full-time staff person or one Americorps member can manage about 20 courses a year on their own. Once IHN expanded the program, IHN needed one staff person and two AmeriCorps VISTAs to implement 45 courses for the year. To expand the program to 100 courses a year, IHN plans on hiring two full-time staff members and two AmeriCorps VISTAs to successfully implement the program.

How many volunteers do you need to implement programming?

Below is a chart to give a sense of how many volunteers your organization would need to recruit if you plan to implement 1, 5, 10, or 20 courses a year. It is important to start slowly and build up to more courses as you get more comfortable with the program.

	1 Course	5 Courses	10 Courses	20 Courses	Comments
Volunteers commit to volunteering for only 1 class	Need to recruit 18 volunteers	Need to recruit 90 volunteers	Need to recruit 180 volunteers	Need to recruit 360 volunteers	This is the least frequent pattern that IHN sees with their volunteers. If you are in a location that is experiencing high numbers of college students volunteering, this will likely be the most common for you. Most IHN volunteers like to volunteer for at least the duration of 1 complete course, not just 1 class in a course.
Volunteers commit to volunteering for 1 complete course (6 classes)	Need to recruit 3 volunteers	Need to recruit 15 volunteers	Need to recruit 30 volunteers	Need to recruit 60 volunteers	IHN sees this pattern infrequently. IHN often finds volunteers who are looking for ways to get involved in the community and want to see if Cooking Matters is a good fit for them. This typically leads to volunteers coming back to volunteer more.
Volunteers commit to volunteering for 2 complete courses (12 classes)	Need to recruit 1-2 volunteers	Need to recruit 6-8 volunteers	Need to recruit 15 volunteers	Need to recruit 30 volunteers	This is the most common volunteer pattern IHN sees with volunteers. IHN finds that volunteers will commit to volunteering for more than 1 course. This allows IHN to not have to recruit as many volunteers but focus on recruiting quality volunteers.

BUDGET

Cooking Matters partners incur local Cooking Matters programming costs. Cooking Matters at the national level provides an overview of estimated costs for implementing the program which will be beneficial to reference before starting the program.³ Based on Cooking Matters' estimated costs and IHN's estimated costs, the budget considers the implementation cost for 1, 5, 25, and 50 courses with 10 participants per class. It is important to remember that costs will vary depending on the number of participants, equipment procurement, site location, etc.

Who is paying for the classes?

Cooking Matters at the national level recommends that programming is offered for free to participants. Therefore, your organization will need to determine if the site location or if your organization is covering the costs for the program to be implemented at the site location. Typically, IHN will have a conversation with the site coordinator to determine whether IHN will provide the funds for the course or whether the site location would like to contribute funding for the program. The majority of the sites that partner with IHN rely on IHN to provide complete funding for the program. However, some sites reimburse IHN for full program costs or partial program costs.



Groceries used for Cooking Matters classes



The "MyPlate" take-home gifts for participants

Budget based on 10 participants in each class

Expenses	1 Course	5 Courses	10 Courses	20 Courses	Comments
Program coordinator time	Cooking Matters estimates this many hours of class time plus planning to implement and facilitate the course: 12+ hours 60+ hours 300+ hours 600+ hours				Your organization is not required to hire a full-time staff person to implement the program. While it may be easier to have a staff person implement the course, a full-time volunteer can fulfill this role. IHN has hired a full-time staff person and works with an Americorps VISTA to implement and facilitate the program.
Initial course equipment procurement	1 mobile kitchen needed: \$650-\$1,000	1 mobile kitchen needed: \$650-\$1,000	3 mobile kitchens needed: \$1,950-\$3,000	6 mobile kitchens needed: \$3,900-\$6,000	Equipment cost varies depending on the quality of equipment purchased. The quantity of materials purchased depends on the number of classes you plan to teach each year. Mobile kitchens are needed to transport equipment to site locations. See "Kitchen Inventory" on page 14.
Food cost for in-class and take-home groceries	\$600	\$3,000	\$15,000	\$30,000	In-class and take-home food items cost \$10 per participant for each class.
Transportation and equipment replacement	\$60	\$300	\$1,500	\$3,000	Equipment will break from wear and tear. It is important to budget for equipment that needs to be replaced.
Take home items: reusable grocery bags, Good and Cheap books, and MyPlate	\$60	\$300	\$1,500	\$3,000	You are not required to provide the Good and Cheap book (\$5 each) or the MyPlates (\$5 each). IHN has found that providing these extra items increases participant retention.
\$10 grocery store challenge activity	\$100	\$500	\$2,500	\$5,000	Your organization may not be able to offer the grocery store challenge. This price depends on what your organization can provide.
Participant incentive	\$200	\$1,000	\$2,500	\$10,000	Your organization can choose what to provide as participant incentives. IHN has decided to spend \$20 per participant as incentives to the graduates of the program.
Volunteer gifts	\$60	\$3,000	\$1,500	\$3,000	"Volunteer incentives cost \$20 per volunteer, and there are 3 volunteers per class. It is not required to incentivize volunteers, but IHN finds volunteer incentives help increase volunteer retention. Also, the volunteer gifts help ensure volunteers know they are appreciated. IHN provides a \$15 grocery store gift card and a \$5 body/hand soap."
Estimated Expense Total	\$1,730 to \$2,080 + staff time	\$8,750 to \$9,100 + staff time	\$26,450 to \$27,500 + staff time	\$57,900 to \$60,000 + staff time	

SUSTAINABILITY

The Cooking Matters program can improve access to healthy foods for people in low-income communities and/or using food assistance. With this, it is important to consider the inputs needed to sustainably run and expand the Cooking Matters program year after year. IHN has focused on keys ways to make sure the Cooking Matters program runs sustainably in the community:

1. **Volunteer recruitment and retention:**

The Cooking Matters program relies heavily on volunteers to implement the program successfully and sustainably. The program coordinator or other team members should seek out ways to continuously recruit volunteers for the program by making connections with community organizations, local universities, churches, and companies that might be a good source of volunteers. IHN has also integrated volunteer incentives to keep volunteers coming back. Volunteers love the gifts and look forward to them after the successful completion of volunteering with the program. IHN makes sure to recognize volunteers on their birthdays and milestones of working with us, i.e six months volunteering, two years, etc.

2. Site recruitment: The Cooking Matters program needs to expand and reach new sites and populations. Throughout the program, partners should review current class locations and identify potential additional sites that will reach new or underserved communities. Once a potential new class site is identified, partners should meet with the potential new class site host to discuss Cooking Matters and determine the sites' interests and suitability of their location.

3. Secure funding: The Cooking Matters partners incur local Cooking Matters programming costs. To fund current operating costs and expand the program, it is important to secure long-term funding through grants or corporate sponsorships. Networking allows you to get to know community partners to get nominated for grants.

4. **Reassessment of the community's needs:**

It is important for Cooking Matters partners to reassess the impacts of the program on their communities. This will determine if Cooking

Matters addresses the needs of the people the program serves. Cooking Matters provides resources such as a data analysis toolkit to assess participant outcomes, so partners can evaluate participant outcomes.

5. AmeriCorps VISTA: IHN works with AmeriCorps VISTAs to help facilitate and run the Cooking Matters program. IHN initially hired two VISTAs at the start of the program. Once the program was well established, IHN now onboards one VISTA each year to work with the Cooking Matters program. For more information about the AmeriCorps VISTA program, visit their website at <https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/amicorps>.

TESTIMONIES

“During my time volunteering with Cooking Matters, I have been able to play a role in helping my community learn about the importance of healthy eating, necessary skills to cook at home, and the ability to purchase groceries on a budget. I have had the opportunity to see participants grow during the 6-week course, take home this knowledge to their families, and make strides towards living a healthier life.”

Hannah Miskell, Cooking Matters volunteer

“Cooking Matters is a program that keeps me coming back to volunteer for over the past 2 years! With its great program coordinators, fellow volunteers who turn into friendships, and active participants, I leave every class with a happy heart knowing I taught someone about how to read a nutrition facts label, plan healthy meals, etc. I enjoy watching the participants learn and grow in all areas of cooking and nutrition throughout the 6-week course! Extra icing on the cake is the delicious, nutrient-dense recipes that I now make at home!”

Jessica Oakes, Cooking Matters volunteer

RESOURCES

When your organization partners with Cooking Matters, Cooking Matters provides your organization with a variety of resources to successfully implement the program. A list of these resources can be found in the Partnership Agreement.³ Also, IHN has developed supplemental resources that are also important to consider when implementing your program. The chart below shows a comparison of Cooking Matters' national resources and IHN's resources.

	Cooking Matters National Resources	Indy Hunger Network Supplemental Resources
Program Materials	Cooking Matters at the national level provides organizations with up-to-date curricula, including participant books and instructor guidebooks. Only adults, families, and parents' books are free. You have to pay for the teens and kids' books. Guides include key talking points, interactive activities, and nutritious recipes. Curricula are available to partners through the Salesforce portal. Each participant receives the program curriculum book that includes all recipes, activities, and handouts referenced in class. This book is provided by Cooking Matters at a national level.	IHN uses the curriculum that Cooking Matters provides. However, IHN has some resources that IHN's volunteer dieticians have provided to share with participants as an addition to the Cooking Matters curriculum. Some of the extra handouts include a flyer on what produce is in season, how to properly store produce, and a handout on the best method for navigating the grocery store. IHN also provides an extra cookbook for each participant upon the completion of the class series called Good and Cheap. IHN purchases MyPlates for participants as gifts to encourage them to use this format when preparing their meals.
Training	Cooking Matters at the national level provides online help and training systems that partners use to access videos, tools, and resources for training new volunteers and program coordinators.	IHN developed a phone screening tool to communicate with new volunteers about the skills needed for the role and the expectations for their position to help determine whether they will be a good fit for the program and the organization. Typically, phone screenings take about 30 minutes. From there, IHN refers volunteers to the Cooking Matters program training online. Once volunteers have completed the online training, IHN allows them to sign up for volunteering through Sign Up Genius.
Technical Assistance	Cooking Matters at the national level provides technical assistance to partners, including ongoing support made available through the technical assistance help desk.	IHN does not provide technical assistance for partners or sites
Survey Tool and Data Analysis	Participant surveys can be administered in paper format or an electronic format. If paper surveys are administered, organizations must enter a survey no later than 1 week before the end of the course through their survey link/application. Survey analysis can be found through Salesforce.	IHN chooses to provide all surveys in paper form. IHN tried to do surveys via tablets but found it difficult connecting to wifi at sites. IHN may reevaluate using the electronic format by purchasing an internet plan. IHN also works with a volunteer statistician to analyze surveys that are housed on Salesforce.
Additional Resources	Partnership Agreement Cooking Matters Gold Standards Volunteer Gold Standards Surveys Enrollment forms Coordination Guide Graduation Certificate Attendance sheets Waivers Promotional material Participant flyer	Volunteer flyer Volunteer phone screening Registration form IHN's Site Application and Agreement IHN's Volunteer Standards for Cooking Matters

WEB-BASED RESOURCES

Indiana Resources

Indy Hunger Network

<https://www.indyhunger.org/current-projects/>

Indy Hunger Network's website provides information about the Cooking Matters program and other hunger-related initiatives in Indianapolis.

National Resources

Cooking Matters at the National Level

<https://cookingmatters.org/>

The Cooking Matters national website provides information about the Cooking Matters program as a whole and offers recipes, videos, answers to common questions, and a guide for how to get involved in the program.

Cooking Matters Colorado

<https://co.cookingmatters.org/>

The Cooking Matters Colorado website provides similar information to the Cooking Matters national website, but the information is specific to the Colorado program. Cooking Matters Colorado is a large and well established Cooking Matters program and can be used as a great example for your organization.

Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance

<https://www.arhungeralliance.org/programs/no-kid-hungry/cooking-matters/>

Cooking Matters Arkansas is a part of the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance. The Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance website provides an overview of the Cooking Matters program and also provides additional information about other hunger related programs in the state.

Nutrition Resources

Fresh Baby

<https://www.freshbaby.com/>

IHN purchases the "MyPlate" given out to participants at the end of the program from this company

Good and Cheap

<https://books.leannebrown.com/good-and-cheap.pdf>

This is a cookbook filled with delicious, healthful recipes at an affordable price. The cookbook was created for people living on the U.S. food stamp allotment of \$4.00 a day.

What's Cooking? USDA Mixing Bowl

<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

This website provides resources and recipes for eating healthfully at an affordable price.

Dietary Guidelines

<https://health.gov/our-work/food-nutrition/2015-2020-dietary-guidelines>

These evidence-based dietary guidelines are designed for professionals to help individuals and families consume a healthy, nutritionally adequate diet. The Dietary Guidelines are updated every five years.

REFERENCES

1. Share Our Strength's Cooking Matters. It's Dinnertime: A Report on Low-Income Families' Efforts to Plan, Shop for and Cook Healthy Meals. <https://cookingmatters.org/ItsDinnertime>.
2. Share Our Strength's Cooking Matters. Cooking Matters Course Impact Evaluation Final Report. <https://cookingmatters.org/node/2463>.
3. Share Our Strength's Cooking Matters. Cooking Matters Partnership Application. <https://strength.formstack.com/forms/cmpartnerapp>
4. Share Our Strength's Cooking Matters. Program Evaluation. <https://cookingmatters.org/node/2463>.

APPENDIX

- Cooking Education Interest Form
- Site Application and Agreement
- Cooking Matters Partnership Understanding
- IHN Volunteer Recruitment Flyer
- IHN Volunteer Standards for Cooking Matters



COOKING EDUCATION INTEREST FORM

(Please either circle or write out the information below)

Name: _____

Would you be interested in a free cooking & nutrition education class?

Yes No

Are you a parent/caregiver of children ages 0-5?

Yes No

What would be the best time of day for you to participate in such a class?

What is the best way to contact you for information regarding the class?

Email Phone Call Text Message

Please provide either email or phone number indicated above to contact you at:



SITE APPLICATION AND AGREEMENT

Thank you for your interest in offering Cooking Matters to your community! Cooking Matters is a national program of Share Our Strength that empowers participants to choose and prepare tasty, healthy, and affordable meals in a fun and interactive classroom setting.

To ensure the success of each Cooking Matters (CM) course series, we rely upon strong community collaborations. We offer our courses in partnership with schools and community agencies to reach participants at locations that are familiar and accessible to them.

Many resources are needed to operate a Cooking Matters course: funding, instructors, teaching space, food, equipment, course evaluation, supplies and facilities coordination, classroom management, and childcare when necessary. Although our sites are not required to provide the underlined resources, we welcome resources our sites can provide us with.

To be considered as a Host Site/Host Agency for a Cooking Matters course, please read the New Agency Info Packet, and contact the Cooking Matters Program Manager, Megan Songer. Once you have reviewed the information packet, please complete and submit this application & agreement.

Contact Information

_____		_____
Organization Name		Date

Street Address		

City	State	Zip

Primary Contact Person		Job Title
_____		_____
Phone Number	Fax Number	Email
_____	_____	_____

Organizational Information (if unable to answer questions, please indicate so with N/A)

How do you classify your organization? (i.e. School, Church, Community Center, Wellness Center, Housing Development, Food Pantry, etc.)

Briefly describe your organization's work and mission. (Include the types of services and programs you offer)

Does your agency serve low-income individuals? Yes No

Do your clients receive WIC, SNAP, or other nutrition assistance? Yes No

If yes, what % of those served participate in nutrition assistance programs? (If applicable) _____

How do you determine low-income eligibility? (If applicable)

Why are you interested in bringing Cooking Matters courses to your clients and/or community? How do Cooking Matters differ from and/or complement other related programs currently offered in your community?

Ethnic background(s) of the people you serve:

Language(s) spoken by your clients (will there be a need for translation services):

Facility Information

Does your organization have access to a kitchen facility for cooking classes? Yes No

Does your facility have counter or table (two, 8-foot tables) space for 15 people? Yes No

Does your facility offer access to a sink with hot water for hand & dishwashing? Yes No

Does your facility offer reliable sources of electricity? Yes No

Does your facility provide a classroom/meeting area large enough to accommodate 15 people? Yes No

Is your facility easily accessible for clients who rely on public transportation? (not required) Yes No



COOKING MATTERS PARTNERSHIP UNDERSTANDING

Indy Hunger Network, Marion County Public Health Department, YMCA Top 10 Coalition and Gleaners Food Bank

I. Background

Cooking Matters is a nationally recognized, evidence-based program organized by the No Kid Hungry Campaign, a program of Share Our Strength, to help end childhood hunger in America. It is a hands-on, six-week cooking course with interactive lessons on cooking, food safety, and management of food resources. The curriculum follows the USDA's MyPlate and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Evaluation results have shown that Cooking Matters graduates continue to practice improving their eating habits and cooking skills they learned in class.

To help fill the gaps in cooking education in Marion County, the Indy Hunger Network (IHN), in collaboration with the Marion County Public Health Department (MCPHD) and the YMCA of Greater Indianapolis (Top 10 coalition), is providing the Cooking Matters curriculum to empower low-income individuals and families with the skills to prepare healthy meals at home on a budget. Your commitment as an organization for offering Cooking Matters classes contributes to ending hunger and improving the health and wellness of Marion County residents.

II. Purpose of this Memorandum

To clearly describe the roles and responsibilities of the Cooking Matters program and Gleaners Food Bank to operate an efficient and successful program in which both parties will benefit.

III. Parties' Roles and Responsibilities

- a. IHN/MCPHD/Top 10 shall:
- b. Provide volunteers to staff Cooking Matters. This includes but is not limited to: Culinary Instructor, Nutrition Instructor, Assistant.
- c. Arrange a site visit to review program details and assessment of location space.
- d. Provide program materials for promotion of Cooking Matters as well as evaluations, waivers, and other necessary registration materials.
- e. Provide cooking equipment and food (pans, utensils, burners, etc.)
- f. Provide sign-in sheets at initial sign-up and each class.
- g. Comply with HIPAA rules and regulations. All information is kept strictly confidential. Aggregate data may be used from Cooking Matters evaluations.
- h. Provide individual materials to all participants, such as a Cooking Matters booklet with recipes and handouts.

- i. Services will be provided free of charge if the group is within Marion County.
- j. Assure all food safety standards are followed while preparing, cooking, and storing food and beverage items.
- k. Assure handwashing protocols are followed.

Organization shall:

Designate one point of contact (POC) person for the Cooking Matters Manager, Megan Songer, to communicate with regarding location, schedule, time, materials, etc.

Facilitate initial sign-up for Cooking Matters and provide a list of participants to the Cooking Matters coordinator.

Provide sufficient and consistent meeting room space to accommodate Cooking Matters. Hand-washing space is REQUIRED.

Arrange room setup (i.e. tables, chairs, meeting space) for all 6 Cooking Matters classes.

Assure participants are aware of the dates and times of the program and encourage attendance at at least 4 out of the 6 classes.

Provide additional resources offered in the application for successful implementation of the Cooking Matters classes

Review and provide feedback once the program is complete.

The organization shall NOT:

The organization shall not: Use any materials from the Cooking Matters book for programming other than the Cooking Matters program conducted in cooperation with Indy Hunger Network. This includes recipes in the book, activities, and handouts. Usage of Cooking Matters materials for other purposes may result in termination of Indy Hunger Network’s agreement with Share Our Strength and jeopardize our ability to continue operating this program. Resources found on the Cooking Matters website are acceptable for use by the public.

VIII. Term and Amendment

This agreement shall be in effect for the period of the program beginning, 7/25/2019. This Agreement represents the entire understanding of both parties with respect to this partnership.





Organization Name & Site Coordinator Name


Site Coordinator signature

Date

Indy Hunger Network staff

Date

<h3>What is Cooking Matters?</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A six week hands on cooking class for low income families • Participants partake in a hands on grocery store tour • Each participant gains cooking skills and knowledge on food and nutrition. • Participants learn how to create healthy affordable meals. • Participants take home recipes and groceries each week. • If a participant attends 4 out of 6 classes they will take home an extra incentive during graduation. 	<p>Please Contact Megan Songer for Cooking Matters volunteer opportunities and class locations. msonger@indyhunger.org</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Program Sponsored by:</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Program Supported By:</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">   </div>	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Cooking Matters Volunteers Needed!</h2> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;">  </div>
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<h3>Cooking Matters Volunteer Overview:</h3> <p>Your Duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a welcoming environment, respecting participants and managing appropriate behavior. • Demonstrate subject expertise and class leadership while actively engaging participants in discussion and hands on activities. • Present, practice and encourage use of information and skills in healthy eating, food resource management, cooking and food safety and meal prep. <p>Your Time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead 2-hour class once a week for 6 weeks. • 60 minutes prep each week which includes, reviewing material and setting up and tearing down at each class. • A 30-minute phone screening and approximately a 3-hour online training is to be completed which covers class material, and class facilitation, and in person class kick off with the opportunity to lead a practice class session. 	<p>“Cooking Matters encouraged me to continue to cook healthy. Making healthier eating choices allows me to live a longer life. Taking this course makes me think about my family.”</p> <p>–Cooking Matters Participant</p> <p>Your Benefit as a Volunteer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share passion, knowledge, and experience while improving healthy food behaviors of your community and teaching participants to eat healthy on a budget. • Grow personally in your own knowledge and skills of nutrition and cooking as you provide invaluable resources to your community. <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;">  </div>	<h3>Cooking Course Instructors Roles</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culinary Instructors: teaches adults, kids, and teens how to cook and shop for healthy, low-cost foods. They combine their own knowledge and experience with the lesson plans and recipes provided in the Cooking Matters curricula. Culinary volunteers can be a chef in training, a chef, retired chef or someone who genuinely loves cooking and teaching skills they have acquired. • Nutrition Instructors: teaches adults, kids, and teens how to make healthy choices. They use the lesson plans and instructional materials provided in the Cooking Matters curricula, along with their own expertise in nutrition. Nutrition volunteers are typically graduates of or enrolled in dietetics programs, have experience working in a nutrition and dietetics position, or retired in the field of nutrition and dietetics. • Assistants: helps before, during and after classes. Duties may include shopping for food, handing out and collecting class materials, engaging reluctant participants, helping with set up and clean up, helping with dishes, taking photos or collecting stories during class to help record the Cooking Matters course experience. Additionally, any other duties that are appropriate to make the class run smoothly. <p style="text-align: center;">If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Megan Songer at msonger@indyhunger.org or 317-331-5519.</p>
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IHN Volunteer Standards for Cooking Matters

Cooking Matters

Cooking Matters is a nationally recognized, evidence-based program, offered to individuals and families to help reduce hunger and improve nutrition through cooking education. Through Cooking Matters, participants will learn to shop smarter, use nutrition information to make healthier choices, and develop the basic skills to prepare delicious, healthy, and affordable meals.

For Cooking Matters to be successful, it is essential that all volunteers follow the curriculum and supported content (Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPlate) as closely as possible. Cooking Matters volunteers must adhere to the lesson plans and nutrition messages presented in the cooking education curriculum. While we all may have personal journeys ourselves, as volunteers we have to make sure we are not including personal preferences that do not fall with the guidelines of Cooking Matters.

Cooking Matters Guiding Principles

The negative health and economic effects of hunger and poor diet can be avoided if families know how to shop for and prepare healthy, low-cost meals.

Chefs and other food and nutrition experts are valued instructors because of their expertise in food preparation and budgeting, as well as their creativity and energy.

Food is to be enjoyed. Those living on a low income deserve to enjoy their food as well and need to know how to create food that is delicious, satisfying, and healthy.

Cooking and eating meals as a family is an important social activity.

Volunteering, or sharing our strengths, is a way to create community wealth.

Cooking Matters Compliance with Gold Standards

Below are listed guidelines for how to stay in compliance as a volunteer and keep food and nutrition education universal and accurate to our participants:

Avoid sharing fad diets, personal diets, preferences, or eating patterns that have worked for you unless it falls within the Cooking Matters guidelines.

If a participant asks about weight loss the answer should always be science-based. For example: Encourage calories in versus calories out, eating a variety of nutrient-dense foods from all the food groups, and watching portion sizes. Additionally, emphasize that a 1-2 pound weight loss per week is the recommendation for sustainable weight loss.

Never advise participants to eliminate any food groups from their diet unless they have a medical reason why they have to.

Never make up an answer to any question from a participant.

It is fine to acknowledge that you do not know an answer. Let them know that you have the resources to find that answer, and provide it to them the following week.

Health is at the forefront of Cooking Matters; always keep this in mind when educating and cooking the meals.

If you would like to adjust a recipe or you would like to use a recipe of your own it must meet the recipe guidelines from Cooking Matters. In this case, you will want to share the adjusted recipe or new recipe with the Cooking Matters Coordinator so a Dietitian can do a nutrient analysis on the recipe to make sure it meets the criteria (criteria are attached).

As a culinary or nutrition volunteer, it is important to teach participants how to flavor food without added salt, sugar, and saturated fat; therefore incorporating other methods with spices, herbs, and other healthier alternatives is an important concept in Cooking Matters. The reason for this is because obesity, diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, and stroke are among the leading chronic diseases and causes of death in our nation and Marion County.

If misinformation is provided by an instructor(s) the Cooking Matters Coordinator will effectively correct it and steer the class back on track.

This is why Cooking Matters has both a nutrition instructor and a culinary instructor. Keep in mind and respect the wide range of expertise that makes for a successful course. For example, if one instructor hears another instructor give incorrect advice, respectfully correct it, or share with the instructor privately what the correct response would be, and they can make that correction to the class themselves. (“I just wanted to correct what I said previously...”)

Avoid sharing extraneous information regarding food and nutrition.

There is endless misleading information on nutrition through social media and the news, and it may be confusing for participants to know what is good or bad for them to eat. Volunteers should always focus on nourishing the body and answer how the benefits of eating particular foods outweigh the risk. For example, while organic fruits and vegetables may have fewer pesticides and lead to less ingestion of chemicals, we know that the benefits of just eating fruits and vegetables, whether they are organic or not, outweigh the risk of not eating them at all.

For additional information regarding the standards set forth by Cooking Matters, please refer to your Gold Standards for a Cooking Matters Course document.

Sign: _____ Date: _____

THIS GUIDE WAS PREPARED IN COLLABORATION WITH THE
INDIANA UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR RURAL ENGAGEMENT.

**750 E. Kirkwood Avenue
Bloomington, IN 47405
Phone: (812) 855-0568**

rural.indiana.edu



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