

# Building on Connections Brings Stockboxes for Seniors

In Wisconsin's Portage and Wood counties, the efforts of FoodWise Nutrition Coordinator Kelly Hammond have led to community trust and efficient innovation when high-impact resources from organizations outside the area are available.

## A Challenge

When the Milwaukee-based organization Hunger Task Force reached out to Kelly Hammond, FoodWise Nutrition Coordinator in Portage and Wood counties, they had funding to expand statewide the Stockboxes project they had been coordinating for over 10 years in south central Wisconsin. The Aging and Disability Resource Center had data showing that Portage and Wood had many seniors who could be positively impacted with the support of one 25-pound box of commodity foods in a monthly package.

Hammond understood the care it takes connecting local organizations with those outside of the community. Partners gathered around common priorities, including how best to help food pantries prioritize giving individuals choice about the items they take home. It is important that people engaging with the resources are not simply given what is available, but can choose items that are right for them.



*FoodWise has built such community trust to connect with people and make this project move.*

*- Kelly Hammond, FoodWise Nutrition Coordinator in Portage and Wood Counties*

## A Solution



In Stevens Point, Hammond gathered ADRC, Housing Authority, local food pantries and Central Rivers Farmshed around the table with HTF. It was decided that although boxes contain pre-determined items, 25 pounds of shelf-stable goods can fill a need for a significant time. Plus, there was a known community need.

Farmshed offered to donate gleaned and unsold fruits and vegetables. This increased fresh options. It also created opportunities for individuals to pick and take foods they wanted and would consume.

Working with efficiency to address logistics, ADRC took up outreach and served as a pickup site. Housing Authority contracted with curbwise LLC to have boxes delivered by bike to seniors unable to transport a heavy box of goods on their own. And Farmshed took up the mantle of adding local, fresh produce to the monthly boxes.

## Successes

Hammond was contacted in June of 2021. The coalition came together in July, and in August, the first Stockboxes were sent out in Portage. Although ADRC has had some trouble getting boxes into seniors' pantries, around 100 boxes a month have been going out into the community.

The process in Wood county moved with less speed as it is part of Central ADRC and incorporates additional counties. However, the first month of boxes delivered in Wood connected 280 eligible individuals to the Stockbox project.

Considering efforts to make sure as many boxes go out as possible, next steps include incorporating recipes and resources for how to use items in the boxes. This offers education and encourages experimenting with items individuals might not have tried before.

Read more from  
[Hunger Task Force's press release.](#)