CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY
School of Medicine

Master of Public Health Program

Tobacco Cessation Outreach with the CONNECT-Pantries Project

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CONNECT PANTRIES
CONNECTING COMMUNITY TO LIVE TOBACCO FREE

Healthy Neighborhoods
Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods at Case Western Reserve University

Background

- Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods at CWRU School of Medicine
- Intends to address chronic health issues in disadvantaged neighborhoods in the Greater Cleveland area through research and community partnerships

- The CONNECT-Pantries project aims to increase the **reach** and **effectiveness** of the Ohio Tobacco Quitline for socioeconomically disadvantaged smokers
  - Free resource that can help increase smoking cessation
  - Socioeconomic disparities in quitline awareness
- **Ask-Advise-Connect** (AAC) is a model of quitline counseling used in primary care settings
  - Adapted for use in food pantries

Population

- Smoking adults visiting Greater Cleveland Food Bank (GCFB) food pantries
  - Generally socioeconomically disadvantaged
- Tobacco use is disproportionately high
- Significant barriers to accessing and using cessation services
- 25-30% of smoking adults do not see a primary care provider annually

Learning Objectives

- Apply fieldwork skills to recruit pantries and survey patrons in person.
- Analyze GCFB data for changes in food pantry characteristics between 2024 and 2025.
- Apply GIS skills to map changes in Cleveland food pantry landscape from 2024 to 2025.
- Create and maintain materials and schedules to support day-to-day operations of the project

Activities

- Visited pantries to meet with managers for project recruitment
- Collected observations of pantry operations and flow
- Surveyed pantry patrons in person for baseline demographics, smoking rates, and food pantry perceptions
- Maintained pantry visit calendar for research team
- Re-designed REDCap forms for internal data management
- Translated study materials into Spanish
- Created and updated standard operational procedures documents for research team training

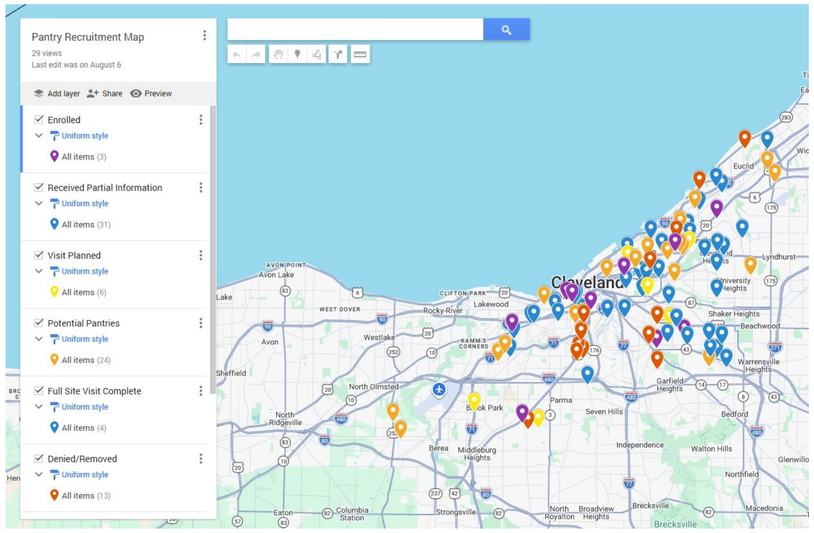


Figure 1. Map of food pantries in the recruitment pool labeled by stage of the recruitment process.

Deliverables

- 2024 and 2025 food pantry landscape maps (still in progress)
- Spanish-language study materials
- Survey and data management standard operating procedures documents
- Policy report exploring the impact of SNAP cuts on GCFB pantries (in progress)

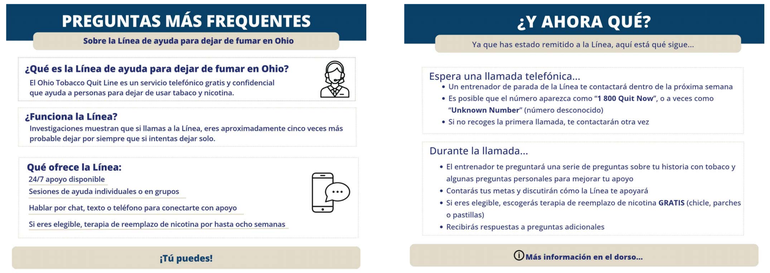


Figure 2. Spanish-language frequently asked questions cards.

Lessons Learned

- Communication and organization is paramount when working on a large, interdisciplinary team with community partners
- Flexibility is important - public health interventions are subject to constant changes and delays
- Public health fieldwork requires clear and concise communication that supports all levels of comprehension

Public Health Implications

- Outreach and recruitment is more effective when it is proactive instead of passive
- Alternative outreach strategies that meet people where they are in community settings can be extremely impactful
- Collaboration with community partners can expand outreach and effectiveness
- The resources already exist for tobacco cessation - importance of connecting people to them

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