**Case Study 1 - Food Insecurity**

1. **Describe four federal food assistance programs and identify each program’s criteria for eligibility.**

Michigan’s minimum wage is $9.45/hr as of March 2019, so our mom makes $378/wk gross, \*12% taxes3= $332 net take home, not figuring in anything else taken out of her check. This is $17,264/yr, well below established poverty line for a family of 4.

SNAP Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: purpose is to improve diets of low-income households by increasing access to food/food purchasing ability. Funds are loaded into an account and disbursed by debit card to the program enrollee to use at select retail food establishments. Eligibility is based on household size, income, assets, housing costs, work requirements, and a few other criteria.4

NSLP National School Lunch Program: was designed to support children nutritionally while they learned in school (National School Lunch Act, 1946) and currently provides reduced-price or free lunches to eligible children. Participating school systems receive subsidies from the USDA. Eligible children come from households at or below 185% of poverty guidelines (reduced 185%-130%, free below 130%)4

SFSP Summer Food Service Program: provides a mid-day meal for children in low income neighborhoods when school is not in session. Approved organizations receive reimbursement for meals served and documented costs of running the program. All under the age of 18 will be served. If it’s a summer camp there are some additional guidelines.4

WIC Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children: was designed for low-income pregnant women, breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to 5yrs old at risk for malnutrition. Program provides nutrition education, select food items, and referrals to health care or other services. Women receive vouchers for food items to use at participating food retail stores. Eligibility is income under 185% poverty threshold and recommendation by a qualified health professional.4

1. **Propose possible solutions for the family to support access to food and adequate nutrition; include federally funded food assistance programs for which they are eligible on the basis of their socioeconomic status. Also include community outreach programs that might be of benefit. You can find examples of these community programs in Table 10-4 and on pg. 392-393 in your textbook.**

Our family already receives SNAP benefits, and since we don’t know how old her children are I’ll assume they are all school-aged. We must rule out WIC then. Due to her assumed age (she must be at least 20?) and the children we must rule out commodities and head start too. I would see if there is a community food bank in the area (TEFAP) that gives out canned/boxed goods – when she runs out of SNAP she can come here and get a box. For my area, this is Kalamazoo Loaves and Fishes. The children are eligible for free lunch at school (NSLP) and summer lunch (SFSP), so we just need to worry about breakfast and dinner for them, and her meals. I’m guessing she eats one meal at work, so if we cover breakfast and dinner for all of them they should be fine. At school the children will receive a serving of produce, dairy, and protein – if mom can afford to buy some shelf-stable produce that can be eaten in the motel room at night raw like carrots, apples, or cherries it will be enough. My farmer’s market takes “double-up food bucks” so if the bus has a stop nearby she can go get a bag of vegetables when she has time. In the winter she’s out of luck, as everything in Michigan dies - including our souls - during January – April. Kalamazoo’s homeless shelter provides three meals a day year-round for walk-ins, so she and her children could come here for dinner at the end of the month if her SNAP benefits run out too. There’s a bus stop right outside.

1. **What additional information would be helpful to tailor information and make appropriate referrals to support this family?**

They need a home. You can’t live out of a motel room forever, and when she gets a kitchen again we’ll have more to work with. On HUD’s website I found several contacts for Public Housing Commission; there wasn’t one in Kalamazoo but there was in a few neighboring cities.5 Moving to a different area isn’t an option for her right now (no transportation), so she must either wait for an apartment to open up or chase other agencies. She comes in much lower than the income qualifying threshold,6 so a claim wouldn’t be challenged.She may have to try a few other agencies or find a friend/family member to live with. If she does well in her job eventually she may be considered for a promotion (if she works in a fast-food chain) which may mean health insurance and a pay increase. Changing jobs to a better paying one might be considered too, if she can keep daytime hours (children!). She and her children are Medicaid eligible based on income, so if they need any medical attention we can refer them to a clinic.

I would want to see what an entire month of food consumption looks like before I make suggestions – how long do her SNAP benefits last, what does she purchase, how/what do her children eat, what community resources does she have in her city (that she can get to) that we can work with? What are this family’s specific nutrition concerns? What is her nutrition knowledge level and cooking skills? I can’t make an educated recommendation yet on how to proceed because I haven’t met her – there’s a lot of unknown factors here.

1. **Provide two practical meal ideas for this family while staying at the motel. Consider factors like time, cost, transportation, storage, etc.**

I’m guessing there’s a gas station (dollar store?) within walking distance of the motel, or her job. If she has a backpack or a tote bag, she can walk there with her kids and pick up the following items1:

Recipe 1: Pasta E Fagioli

2 cans cannellini beans $2.00

2 cans of crushed tomatoes – if she can’t find these, sauce, spaghetti sauce, or basically anything tomato-based that’s not ravioli will do $2.00

1 box pasta $1.00

A garlic head, or a cheap container of garlic powder $1.00

2 large microwave-safe bowls, preferably glass, but plastic will be OK $2.00

Cheap can-opener, big plastic spoon $1.00, $1.00

Recipe 2: fried rice

8pk eggs (may have to get at a gas station – Dollar Tree doesn’t have them) $2.00 guess?

1 can mixed vegetables – peas, carrots (or a bag of frozen if the store has it) $1.00

1 box/bag instant rice $1.00

The smallest bottle of cooking oil you can find – veg or olive, doesn’t matter $1.00

Total supplies cost: $15.00

Total potential meals for 4: 4 – which works out to $3.75 per meal, and less than $1 per person

For additional $3.00 she can get a container of quick-cook oats and some cinnamon and have breakfast for everyone too (or nighttime snack).

Recipe 1:

In motel room microwave put half the box of pasta in one bowl with water – cook until done and drain. Use a towel if necessary. Drain one can of beans and add. Dump one can sauce in, add some garlic, and re-heat in microwave until heated through.

It can be made again with the other half box of pasta. I’m not citing a source for this recipe because I’ve made it myself. I make it now, with more spices because I can afford them. She likely cannot.

Recipe 2:

Coat a coffee mug with oil and cook four eggs (separately if needed) in the microwave and set aside. In large bowl combine 2c rice, 2.5c water and cook until done. Stir in vegetables, garlic powder to taste, and 2-3T oil to coat, microwave again until vegetables are heated. Add eggs previously cooked and stir. Serve. Depending on the size box of rice you get and if you get another can of mixed vegetables you can make this again too. Optional add-ins with more expense: green onions, soy sauce and a can of chicken.2

SOURCES:

1) Prices sourced from DollarTree website: https://www.dollartree.com/

2) Elkins, K. 7 legit meals you can make in a microwave that will save you time and money. CNBC MakeIt web site. <https://www.cnbc.com/2017/12/09/easy-meals-you-can-make-in-a-microwave-to-save-time-and-money.html>. Published 9 Dec 2017, accessed 26 Jun 2019.

3) Bankrate.com. 2018-2019 Tax Brackets. <https://www.bankrate.com/finance/taxes/tax-brackets.aspx>

4) Community Nutrition in Action: An Entrepreneurial Approach, 7th edition. M.A. Boyle, D.H. Holben. Wadsworth/Cengage Learning (2017)

5) Housing and Urban Development web site. Rental Help: Michigan, PHAs in Michigan. <https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PIH/documents/PHA_Contact_Report_MI.pdf>. Published unknown, accessed 27 Jun 2019.

6) Housing and Urban Development web site. FY 2019 Income Limits Summary, Kalamazoo/Portage, MI. <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il/il2019/2019summary.odn> Published unknown, accessed 28 Jun 2019