**Training Format Suggestions**

We have gotten feedback that nutrition staff prefer more interactive training sessions, rather than lectures. Please reflect on the needs of the group you are training and a variety of training methods as you plan your trainings. The following are some other approaches to training:

**Demonstration/Skill Lab:**

A person or team actually performs a task, showing and explaining to learners how to do it. A good follow-up for a demonstration is to allow learners to try to do the task themselves while supervised.

**Case Studies:**

A case study is a realistic situation or a series of actual events involving a judgment call. It is presented to learners, either orally or by handout, for analysis and resolution. This is great for problem solving difficult issues.

**Facilitated Discussion/Round Table:**

You can create a planned conversation (exchange of ideas or viewpoints) on a selected topic. Discussions should be guided by a leader, so this would not be appropriate over lunch, when participants typically prefer to eat and socialize. If the discussion is happening in small groups, it is a good idea to have a note-taker so that the items discussed can be reported to the larger group. **Consider ending the day with this format so that staff/volunteers discuss how some of the ideas/concepts from the sessions could be incorporated locally.**

**Role Playing:**

Leaders or learners act out roles presented in an open-ended situation. Role playing is distinguished from drama because the lines are not pre-determined. The participants must supply their own dialog within the context of the roles and the situations, and develop their own ending or outcome to the scenario presented. This is also great for problem-solving related topics.

**Brainstorming:**

Brainstorming is another method of problem solving. Group members suggest possible solutions, in rapid-fire order, either orally or on cards to be posted. All ideas are considered. Criticism and editorializing are not allowed.

**Small Group Break Out Sessions:**

If the facility you meet at has several small rooms, sessions can occur concurrently. The sessions could be short (15-30 minutes) so that all participants can participate in each session and can move around.

**Ideas for Holding a Low-Cost Training**

* Many regions charge a registration fee, usually no more than $15.00 per person.
* Your planning committee can also seek funds and other donations from local contributors.
* Another way to balance the limited funds is to seek speakers who will offer their services for minimal or no cost, or who speak to groups such as ours as a regular part of their job.

**Staff/Volunteer Recognition and Prizes**

The WAND Training Committee offers the following suggestions for a successful training:

* Offer certificates of attendance to each participant, signed by the nutrition director, AAA staff, and/or state staff.
* Leave some time at the end of the training to recognize nutrition program staff and volunteers who have achieved milestones that year (e.g. 10 years of service to the program, etc.).
* Door prizes and freebies can be a fun addition to the day. Here are some ideas from the committee:
* Have each county (or each dining center) donate and bring one gift to raffle. We suggest a $5 value limit.
* Examples of door prizes include pumpkins, a bag of apples, handmade craft items, holiday decorations, a can of coffee, gourds or any garden item, etc.
* Inquire about donations from companies in your area, such as coupons or free product samples, a bushel of apples from a local orchard, note pads and pens, etc.
* A small amount of training funds may be used to purchase educational materials that will be used at the dining centers and by drivers. (i.e. food safety posters)

**How to Address Barriers to Participation**

Committee members discussed several barriers for attending training. Below are some of the issues and some ideas to increase the number of nutrition program staff/volunteers who can attend.

* Some nutrition programs close all dining centers for the day and arrange for frozen meals or cold "sack" lunches given out the day before.
* Some programs find other program staff, aging unit staff, and/or volunteers to run the dining centers for the day.
* When possible, volunteers are used as site managers. Programs who do this find it helpful to plan a "less popular" menu item, so the dining center will not be particularly busy that day.
* Consider closing only smaller dining centers, if back up cannot be found.
* Most programs arrange for transportation to training for their staff/volunteers by either using program/agency vehicles or carpooling, reimbursing drivers for mileage.