**Food Access and Seed Libraries in Rural Public Libraries**

<https://www.webjunction.org/events/webjunction/food-access-and-seed-libraries.html>

Are you looking for ideas to "grow" a seed library and improve access to food for your community? Presenters from small and rural locations in South Carolina will share their experiences with seed libraries (inside branches, at outreach events, and on board a bookmobile) and community refrigerators, and highlight the value of partnerships. You’ll gain knowledge on how to start a seed library from the ground up, how to collaborate with community organizations not generally considered as library partners, and learn better practices for making your library an access point for those experiencing food insecurity.

Presented by: Rebecca Antill, Devon Andrews, Maddie Hibbs, Heath Ward, and Jimmy Wooten

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| **What are your goals for viewing this webinar?** |
| **Personal Goals** |  |
| **Team Goals** |  |
| **Getting Started** |
| The folks at the Richmond Grows Seed Lending Library, in their [Seed Lending Library Toolkit](http://seedlibraries.weebly.com/uploads/2/5/6/0/25601685/seed_lending_library_toolkit.doc) (doc), suggest first considering or discussing why you want to start a seed library. "The reasons for starting a seed library may inform or guide some of the choices you make so it’s helpful to understand your motivations, but don’t get too stuck on formalizing all the reasons." And if you’re exploring starting a community refrigerator, you may have additional reasons to consider with those below.* preserving genetic diversity
* local resilience
* creating community
* thrift
* encouraging gardening
* educating people about seed saving
* opposed to genetically modified foods (food sovereignty)
* social justice
* food insecurity in the community (Visit [Feeding America’s Map the Meal Gap](http://map.feedingamerica.org/) resource to learn more about adult and family food insecurity in your area.)
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| **Partners and Collaborators** |
| All of the presenters in the webinar emphasize the importance of leveraging community partnerships as you create your seed library or community refrigerator. Consider connecting with some of the following to get started:* Local garden club
* Master gardeners or other garden clubs
* Cooperative Extension Office (Find your local [Extension Agency](https://nifa.usda.gov/land-grant-colleges-and-universities-partner-website-directory?state=All&type=Extension))
* Permaculture guild
* Local sustainability group
* Local seed savers group
* Horticulture department at local university
* Local farmers, grocery stores and markets
* Community gardens
* Hardware or garden stores
* Library volunteers
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| **Creating Space and “Seeding” the Library or Refrigerator** |
| The physical logistics of setting up and maintaining your seed library (or community refrigerator) space and stock are key to its success! Explore options shared in the webinar and in the examples in the Seed Library section of [Growing Library Garden Programs](https://www.webjunction.org/news/webjunction/growing-library-garden-programs.html) to determine your initial set up. Add details for each of the following:1. Card catalog, filing cabinet, shelf or table for the seed library
2. Envelopes or packets for seeds and labels
3. Dividers or other ways to sort the collection
4. Seeds!
5. Instructions, signage and growing guides for patrons, if you plan to provide
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| **Policies and Practices** |
| Clear and consistent policies and practices can encourage community engagement with your seed library or refrigerator, but know that things may change after your initial launch, so be flexible as you determine the final policies and practices for moving forward. Here are some of the considerations mentioned by the presenters:* How many seed packs or refrigerator contents can be checked/taken out per person (per day/week)?
* Are you going to police the seed library or refrigerator, if so, how?
* Are you going to track any data? (i.e. number of seed packs, types of seeds, number of users, etc.)
* What additional programming or book displays can you integrate into your new seed library or community refrigerator offerings?
* Other?
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| **Action Plan: (include next steps, who, when, etc.)** |
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