Are you a staff member or a volunteer who’s been interested in starting a cooking demonstration program at your local food bank? This Quick Tip provides some basic guidelines on considerations and materials that are needed to get your initiative off the ground. For additional information, or questions regarding food safety, contact your local Department of Health, WSU Extension SNAP-Ed Office, or WSU Extension Food Sense Office.

**Safety Tips:**
- Make sure everyone involved in the cooking and serving portion of the demonstration has an up-to-date food worker card;
- Ensure you have access to a sink other than a restroom sink;
- Label all your ingredients, and include an ingredient list on your demo table for clients to view;
- Give yourself ample time to set up your station and to prepare your recipe;
- Keep hot food hot and cold food cold;
- Never leave appliances or knives unattended;
- Always advocate for what you need to make the demonstration safe and successful.

**Planning Tips:**
- Tailor your recipes to items that are available and abundant at the food bank while also culturally appropriate to the clients your food bank serves;
- Ensure that your recipes are easy, quick, and low cost. Provide a possible price breakdown on the recipe card itself;
- Identify partners and additional volunteers. Partners like Food Sense and Snap-Ed can help you brainstorm recipes and nutrition education lessons. Increasing the number of active volunteers in your demonstration program will allow you to have more frequent cooking demos at your food bank;
- Identify potential language barriers, and ensure you’re creating a system that accommodates most (if not all) food bank participants;
- Decide what (if any) nutrition education lesson you’d like to pair with your recipe;
- Identify a space to set up that has ventilation and any necessary outlets;
- Always cook what you know (never try a recipe for the first time on your demo day).

**Examples:**
- Recipes can be as simple as a fruit smoothie or a no-cook bean and corn salad. Ingredients for the bean and corn salad include: 1 can of black beans, 1 can of white beans, 1 can of corn, ¼ bunch of parsley, 1 cup of chopped tomatoes, 1 lime, and black pepper.
- For more inspiration check out the USDA What’s Cooking Recipes.

**Basic Materials:**
- Mixing bowl
- Cutting board
- Knife with cover
- Cooking utensils
- Serving tray
- Colander

For more information about starting or developing your farm-to-food bank initiative, please email growingconnections@northwestharvest.org, or contact Laura Titzer at 206.923.7423.