**Mentored Fundraising Assignment 12 Homework Instructions**

**6-Month Mentored Nonprofit Fundraising Certificate Program**

**Center for Sustainable Development.** <https://nonprofit.csd-i.org/nonprofit-fundraising-training-certificate/>

**Assignment 12: Keywords and the 21st Century Communication Secret: [Shhh… It’s all about them!]. Use the same language your visitors use.**

**This week’s resources:**

Class Home Page for Mentored Fundraising

Fundraising Assignment 12 Homework Instructions

Download an example Excel Spread sheet on [Google Search Term Results for Food Bank Newsletters](https://nonprofit.csd-i.org/wp-content/uploads/MentoredProgram/Fundraising-Assignment-Twelve-Search-Results-for-Food-Bank-News-Keywords.xlsx).

**Assignment Twelve. Keywords and the 21st Century Communication Secret: Keywords for Landing Pages**

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| Discussion:  This will be a comprehensive overview of how to find keywords. There is a lot to read and learn about in this assignment. That said, this is what the SEO pros actually do.  This assignment doesn't involve working on your website. It is simply finding keywords in preparation for writing the content (in Word) for a landing page next week. |

Landing pages have two different jobs to do. One is to lure people to your webpage (connecting the two of them together), the other is to give them a way to fulfill what they were searching for (a call to action). They’re both absolutely essential.

Keywords are the tools that provide the lure to get people from an Internet search to your website.

Keywords and landing pages are a bit hand-and-glove. Consequently, there will be a little bit of an overlap between Assignment's 12, 13, 14, and 15. I would consider working on one simple landing page during these four assignments - as one assignment builds upon the other.

**Connecting with Supporters**

This week, in Assignment 12, we are going to be looking at the cornerstone of all digital marketing. This is the intersection between what people are looking for and what you have to offer. It is making the vital connection between exactly how they ask for what they’re looking for and exactly how you portray what you have to offer. This is what Google, Bing, and Yahoo do. Period.

For simplicity let’s say that what a potential customer types into a Google Search is called a ‘search term.’ “Donate to a food bank.”

If you feel that specific search term could be beneficial to you, and for example you include “Donate to a food bank” on your landing page: we will call that a ‘keyword.’

If you have a food bank in Claremont, California, and a person looks for a food bank in Claremont by Googling the search term “food banks in Claremont California,” and you have a landing page called “Food Banks in Claremont California” there is a good likelihood that your webpage will appear in that individual’s Google search results.

We will be looking at using Yoast to help with focus keywords in Assignment 15 (or check it out in WordPress now if you like) to help us make sure that (in this instance) your focus keyword (Food Banks in Claremont) is 1) scattered a meaningful number of times in the landing page’s content, 2) is in the page title, 3) is in the header, 4) is in the meta-description, and 5) is in the page’s URL. By optimizing your SEO in this manner, you will increase your chances of appearing in first page search results.

However, this is a fool’s folly if you haven’t first clearly identified what you are offering, and even more clearly identified what search terms people use who are looking for what you are offering.

For example, if a number of people are using the search term “free food in Los Angeles County” and your focus keyword for your landing page is “Food Banks in Claremont,” the vital connection between the searcher for free food and your food bank may not be made.

If we make the assumption that what a number of people are looking for is indeed exactly what you have to offer, but are using different search terms (than the keywords that appear on your landing page) to find what they are looking for, then you may need to modify your landing page’s focus keyword to better match their search terms.

An example could be that in your part of the country the term “food pantry” is more common than “food bank.”

Due to be exacting nature of connecting on the Internet, it’s really very important to fully distill what a new landing page is about. A good place to start could be a sound bite of what you are offering on that page (free, weekly emergency food packages for people in need in the Claremont area), perhaps described in several ways (food pantry vs. food bank), and then modified to best fit how a potential client or donor might describe it.

A good description can also help you “uncover” the focus keyword for that page.

A really good sound bite can become your meta-description for your landing page.

**Note:** Yoast really good WordPress tool for understanding the different terms that we will be using in this assignment: focus keywords, page titles, headings, meta-descriptions.

**Step One.**

The first thing that I would suggest doing is to develop a simple plan of your website, the landing pages that you hope to develop, and potential ‘placeholder’ focus keywords.

So let’s say that your organization has eight programs:

* a food bank
* a community garden
* Meals on Wheels
* a restaurant and grocery store donation program
* a homeowner vegetable garden donation program
* a volunteer program
* a fundraising program
* a monthly newsletter

Let’s look at those eight programs as if they were eight potential landing pages:

**Excel chart of draft landing pages and their draft keywords**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Landing Page | Draft Focus Keyword | Client/Donor Search Term | Alternate/modified focus keyword |
| Food Bank | Food Banks in Claremont |  |  |
| Community Garden | Grow Food for Your Family |  |  |
| Meals on Wheels | Free Meals delivered to your Home |  |  |
| Grocery & Restaurant Donations | Cut Waste, Feed People—Donate Food |  |  |
| Vegetable Garden Donations | Donate Your Extra Garden Food |  |  |
| Volunteer | Feed Claremont's Hungry: Volunteer! |  |  |
| Fundraising/Donation | End Hunger in Claremont: Donate! |  |  |
| Newsletter Subscriptions/List Building | Subscribe to Food Bank News |  |  |

This week we’re going to focus on developing keywords for the landing page for your prioritized goal from A1 and A2. The idea is to learn the whole process for developing keywords for effective landing pages before developing additional landing pages.

However, mapping out your programs and services like this is a really good exercise. It might help you to prioritize which landing pages to begin with. It can also help you see if you have focus keywords that are repetitive: in other words, you want each program’s landing page to have distinctly different focus keywords.

It also begins the process of thinking about: how do we describe what we do in a few words. If this is a sound bite about what you do: “Free, weekly emergency food packages for people in need in the Claremont area,” how will you turn that into a focus keyword of two or three or four words?

**Step Two.**

So let’s say we are going to focus on the food bank newsletter subscription landing page idea [my prioritized goal] that we will begin writing in Assignment 13.

**Start with your newsletter’s sound bite:**

‘Learn How we solve hunger in Claremont—and how you can participate in the solution too—in this informative monthly newsletter.’

You can even work on generating a page description for additional ideas:  
“Use your people skills: End hunger in Claremont. Join a new community of doers, make new friends, support and encourage people who are hungry. Meet the families in need and learn how special volunteering can be at our food bank by subscribing to our people centered newsletter.”

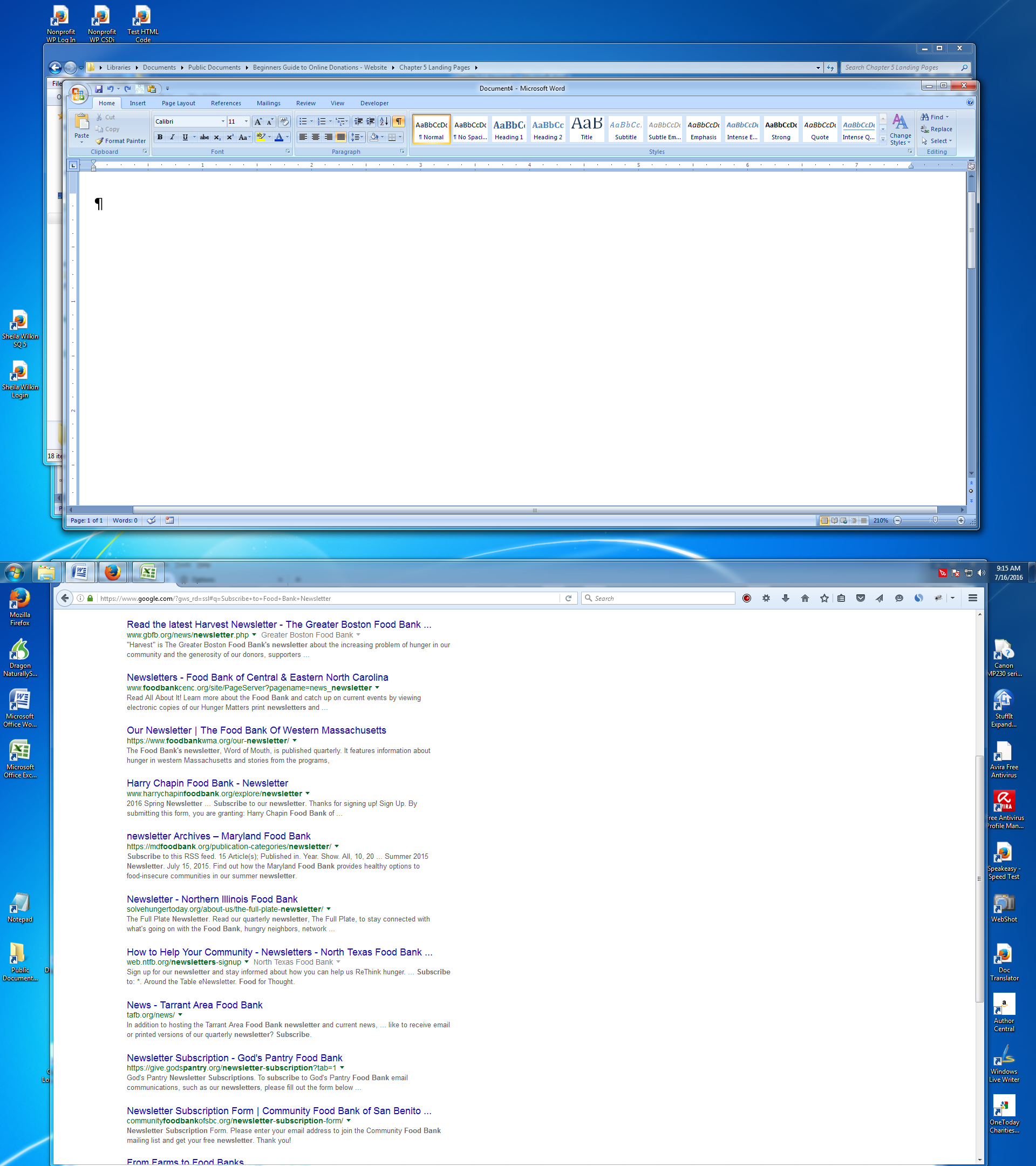
Make a list of three or four potential focus keywords. We’re going to use these to look for the search terms that your potential clients use. Write these as if they were being written by someone hoping to help end hunger in Claremont.

* Subscribe to Claremont Food Bank News
* How to end hunger in Claremont
* Claremont families in need of food

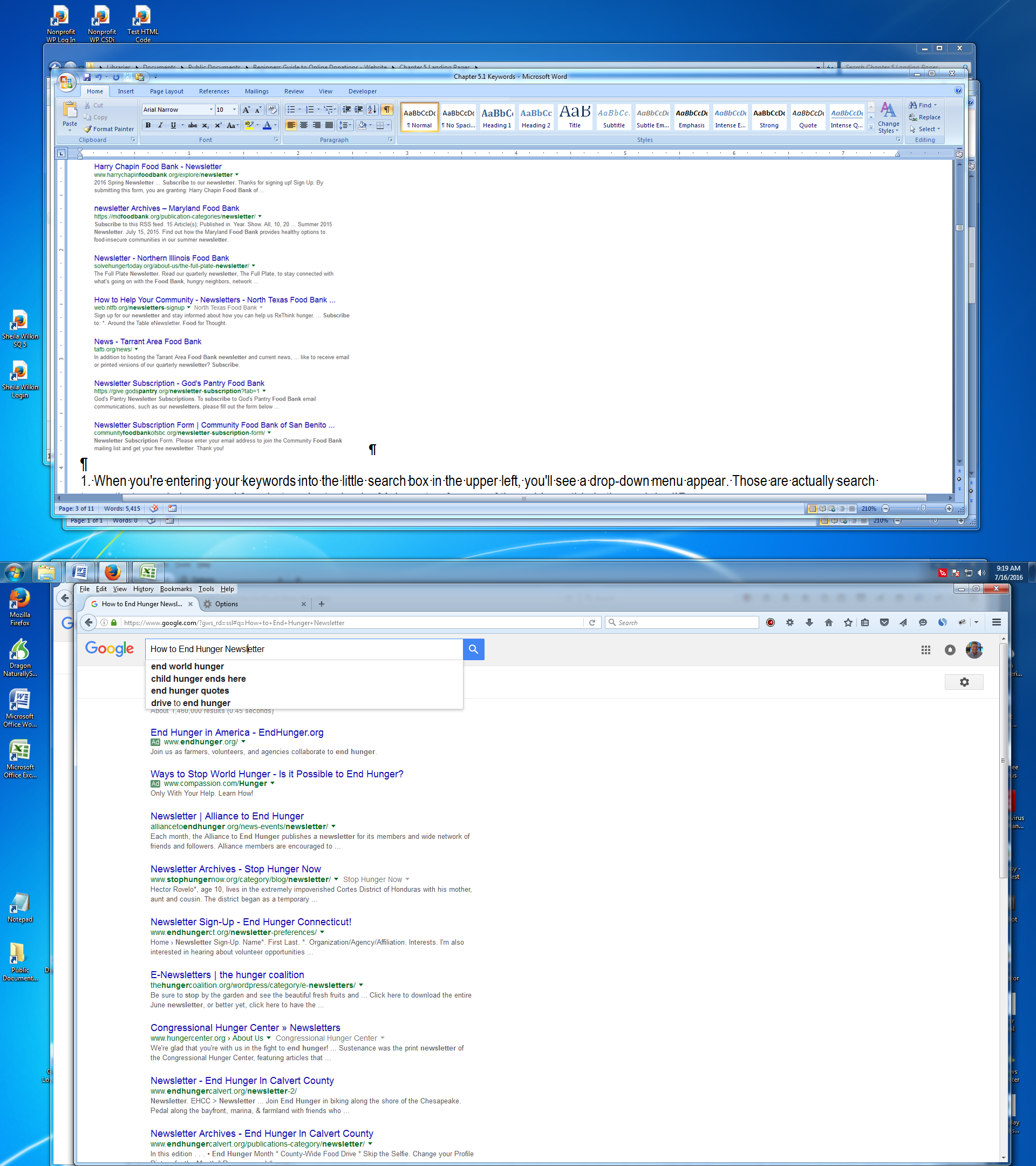
**Step Three.**

If you’re stumped, here are five ideas that you can use to get started: Visit the websites of other food banks to get newsletter subscription keyword ideas.

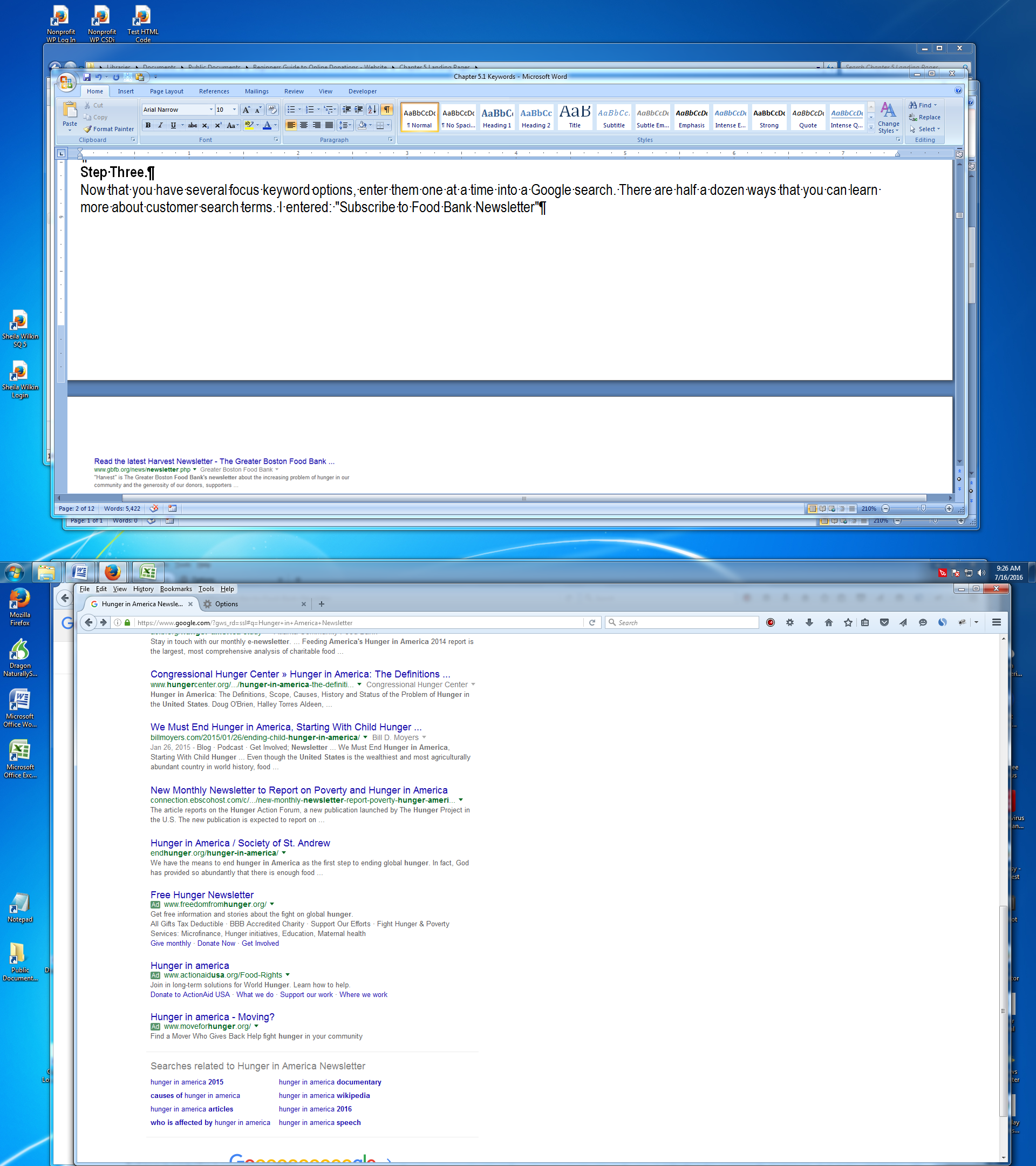
Use your draft keyword ideas above and enter them one at a time into a Google search. There are half a dozen ways that you can learn more about customer search terms. I entered: “Subscribe to Claremont Food Bank News,” and then narrowed it down to “Subscribe to Food Bank News.”



**Idea 1.** When you’re entering your keywords into the little search box in the upper left, you’ll see a drop-down menu appear. Those are actually search terms that people have used for what you’re typing in. Make note of some of these rich ideas: this is the real deal!



**Idea 2.** After you have entered your search, scroll down to the very bottom of the page and you will see (in blue) about 10 additional search terms that people have actually used that may help you choose focus keywords.



**Idea 3.** At both the very top and bottom of the search results will be Google AdWords ads (you can see them in the illustrations above). Many times the organizations writing these ads have hired expert consultants to write them and have also tested which ads are the most effective. Make note of key phrases within these ads as well—because they may be working very well for other organizations similar to yours. They can work well for you too!

**Idea 4.** In a similar fashion, Google’s page one search results are the most effective results as determined by Google. These may also have been professionally written and tested as well. It would be wise to note keywords that you spot that could be useful for you.

**Idea 5.** If one of the search results looks particularly applicable to your program and landing page, click on it. Read the landing page looking for keywords. Read the heading at the top of the page and make note of what it says. If it seems like there’s a keyword tucked into the heading—look in the first paragraph and see if the same keyword exists there too. This may indicate that this is their focus keyword.

Look at the URL of the page you’re on and see if the keyword is within the URL too. Always a good clue to look here.

While on the page, you can hit “control f” and enter the keyword you’ve spotted—and see if it appears a number of times within the page itself.

**Tech Tool:** This is a lot of information! Do you remember in the second chapter I suggested that you create a folder in a series of files for each one of your landing page themes. So for example, right now, create a folder on your hard drive for Food Banks [or your main interest].

Open an Excel spreadsheet and title it ‘Subscribe to Food Bank Newsletter Keyword Google Search.’ Put today’s date in the upper left corner.

Paste in your initial focus keyword ideas at the top.

Type in new keyword ideas that you found during the five activities above.

Also, if you find webpages that you like—copy/paste their URL so you can find them again.

If you see a Google search result that is appealing to you, select it, copy it, and paste it into the Excel spreadsheet.

If you see a Google AdWords ad that is appealing to you, select it, copy it, and paste it into the Excel spreadsheet.

Within 15 or 20 minutes you can have quite a collection of donor generated search terms and competitor generated keywords that address those search terms. Boom.

Save this Excel spreadsheet to your food bank folder that you are using to save this information. Over the next few months you will refer to it over and over again, add information, quantify the information you have, and even add additional sheets for different types of information.

Download an example of this Excel Spread sheet on [Google Search Term Results for Food Bank Newsletters](https://nonprofit.csd-i.org/wp-content/uploads/MentoredProgram/Fundraising-Assignment-Twelve-Search-Results-for-Food-Bank-News-Keywords.xlsx) (or from Download Course Documents).

Finally, another great way to find out what people are looking for, is to look for blogs or Facebook pages or forums like Reditt (or a forum specific to your specialization) where your potential clients and donors visit and leave comments. It’s quite amazing how well they express themselves in a very short sound bite about challenges they are facing and what they’re looking forward to solve them. Note these on your Excel spreadsheet also—and where you found them.

**Step 4. Modify Focus Keywords.**  
Here is the list from step two of potential keywords with potential alternatives found using the techniques above:

My Search: Subscribe to Claremont Food Bank News

* Subscribe to Claremont Food Bank News
* Claremont Food Bank News
* Learn about Claremont Food Banks
* Claremont Food Newsletter
* Newsletter Subscription – Claremont Food Bank
* Online Newsletter – Claremont Food Bank
* News – Claremont Area Food Bank
* Read the latest Food Bank Newsletter
* Newsletters | Claremont Food Pantry

My Search: How to End Hunger in Claremont

* End Hunger in Claremont
* Hunger in California ‎
* Learn about Hunger in Claremont
* End Hunger in Claremont
* How Can I Help Food Banks

My Search: Claremont Families in Need of Food

* Sponsor Families in Claremont

**Step Five.**

**Advanced Techniques**

There are ways to find the actual search terms that people are using that send them to your website. Here are some ideas:

* Google Webmaster (now called Google Search Console) provides something called ‘Search Analytics’ which lists the search terms potential clients have used to reach your website.
* Google Analytics has a similar service called ‘Queries.’
* Google AdWords has a similar service called ‘Search Terms’ which lists the search terms that people used in Google to make your AdWords ad appear. [You will need to have an AdWords grant to do this].
* Google AdWords Keyword Planner. You can enter a competitor’s website and see what keywords Keyword Planner finds. A goldmine for finding keyword ideas when you are getting started.

These four Internet services are more sophisticated than doing a simple Google search as in steps two and three. However, as your skills progress, these three services show you the very search terms that people used to specifically find your your landing page.

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| **Additional Insights.**  **What I’ve learned about searching for food bank newsletter keywords.**  In researching keywords for nonprofit newsletters and food bank newsletters using the techniques that we’re exploring here, I found some mixed results.  The reason that I’m bringing this up is that this happens sometimes. You have a concept or product you’re trying to promote about your nonprofit and when you begin researching keywords—you aren’t satisfied with the results. So here are some tactics to move through this challenge.  **NB:** Please bear in mind that the food bank newsletter example is just an example. The landing pages that you are working on may be on a different subjects entirely. However, the following solutions will be just as applicable to you.  **Solutions.** If in entering your draft keywords you don’t immediately find promising search results such as (in my case) “Subscribe to Claremont Food Bank News” look carefully at what you are seeing and try to uncover a theme.  **I discovered four things.**  **1.** Organizations promoting their newsletters didn’t necessarily come right out and say “Subscribe!” They worked with a compelling theme as their page title (your page title becomes the link that you see in the Google search results):  How to End Hunger in Claremont  When someone clicks on this link in the Google search results, they are taken to a landing page about subscribing to a newsletter that will help them learn how to end hunger in Claremont.  So, on the landing page the person exploring hunger in Claremont learns about several of the ways that the food bank works to solve hunger in Claremont—but then they are also encouraged to subscribe to a newsletter that will help them continue this learning experience.  Some of the organizations added something to the end of the page title indicating newsletters:   * How to End Hunger in Claremont | Newsletters * End Hunger in Claremont | Learn More in our Newsletter * How to End Hunger in Claremont | Learn through our Newsletter   Another way to look at this is that since each landing page needs a call to action, the “End Hunger in Claremont” landing page’s call to action is “Subscribe!” To fulfill the promise you made in your search result “How to End Hunger in Claremont” you need to make sure that you answer the individual’s questions—and then give them an opportunity to receive more information through a subscription.  **2.** A second way that I saw organizations successfully getting around having a search result that says “Subscribe to Our Newsletter!” is to make the name of their newsletter incredibly compelling and a focus keyword all in itself:   * End Hunger News * Hunger in California | The Claremont Food Bank Newsletter   You can look for compelling terms with some of the keywords that you’ve investigated and saved to your Excel spreadsheet. Here are some examples that are general and related to food banks:   * food banks in Claremont * food pantries in Claremont * free food in Claremont * free food in Los Angeles * free food for families * help with free food   **One clue is this:** Many times when I’m searching Google for keywords for a landing page for a new product or service I often find search results that are very professionally done—and AdWords ads that are very professionally done. This would imply to me that other companies and organizations have discovered that people are indeed looking for these products and services and invest time in crafting a captivating page title and compelling page description.  I didn’t see much of this in my keyword search around food bank newsletters. This could explain Number 4 just below—where many people weren’t careful with crafting their page titles and page descriptions about their newsletters.  So my conclusion from this is that people searching the Internet for subjects surrounding a food bank concept (or whatever your organization’s program is) may be looking for ways to solve a problem that they find painful to see.  Because of this, I am more tempted to develop a landing page that addresses a solution to a problem, or offers to help the visitor learn more about solving a problem—and then have the call to action be “Subscribe!”  So you kill two birds with one stone here: you fulfill an Internet searchers quest for participating in a solution with a compelling landing page—and your goal of building your email list with a reason to subscribe.  **4.** Something really, really interesting that I observed while was doing these keyword searches on Google, is what a poor job many people do on their SEO page titles and meta-page descriptions and URL addresses.  One search result that I saw—when I clicked on the link didn’t lead me anywhere that had anything to do with newsletters or subscriptions—even though that’s what the link was about.  Here are some examples of organizations that didn’t craft informative, captivating page titles nor compelling meta descriptions as would be seen using Yoast (Assignment 15, or check it out in WordPress). Because of that, Google just pulled random text from their page:  Our Lady of the Assumption – Claremont CA : Outreach  www.olaclaremont.org/cgi-bin/complex2/showPage.plx?pid=202  OLA provides all the food for the Claremont Community Meal hosted at … The meal is served between 3 and 4:30 p.m. to families at risk or homeless. …. In solidarity with the poor and vulnerable, it responds to their material and spiritual needs.  News & Events | Alliance to End Hunger  alliancetoendhunger.org/news-events/  The easiest way to keep up with recent happenings at the Alliance to End Hunger is to … Check back regularly to discover the Alliance’s latest news and events.  St Faustinas Gate – Food Bank of WNY  www.foodbankwny.org › … › Our Pantry Listing  Food Bank of Western New York  St Faustinas Gate. Pantry. Address, 263 Claremont Avenue Tonawanda … Sign up for our e-newsletter. Sign Up. Manage your e-mail subscription. $$Name$$  Newsletter Sign-Up – End Hunger Connecticut!  www.endhungerct.org/newsletter-preferences/  Home › Newsletter Sign-Up. Name\*. First Last. \*. Organization/Agency/Affiliation. Interests. I’m also interested in hearing about volunteer opportunities …  Here is a good example of a compelling page title and a compelling meta description that someone put some thought into:  Blog & News | No Kid Hungry | End Child Hunger in America  https://www.nokidhungry.org/blog  Share Our Strength. Come Work With Us at No Kid Hungry. In every community across the United States, children are struggling with hunger. Their lives and futures are at risk. |

This week’s chapter introduction was little more detailed than normal because of the incredible importance of this week’s chapter. I wanted to show you the entire three-dimensional process of finding customer-centered keywords rather than just give you a simple overview.

**The homework to turn in will:**

1. Pick the program/landing page (from your prioritized goal) that you wish to focus on.

Open a Word document and:

2. Type in the draft landing page name from you prioritized goal and the draft focus keyword as in Column 2 of the chart in Step 1.

3. Generate a page description as in Step 2. This should be no more than 156 characters—but should really define what your potential website visitors are looking for. Add that to the Word document.

4. From that, your sound bites in A 3, and your compelling two page fact sheet, pick 2 or 3 potential keywords. Add these to the Word doc.

5. Enter them one at a time into a Google search and see what your competitors are up to.

6. Send me a screenshot of your search results from the single best (your favorite) keyword search (shift/print screen). This can just be pasted into your Word document.

7. This will really help you: Copy my excel sheet file "Google Search Term Results for Food Bank Newsletters" and save it to the name of your program/landing page.

* Give it a new page title at the top reflecting your program/landing page
* Change the Goal
* Enter the one search term that you used for your Google search screen shot.
* Enter a few of your favorite page title results that you found on the screen shot you sent me. This could be like down to line 20 of my example.

8. Save the Excel spreadsheet and send it to me.

So you are going to send me your draft LP and draft keyword from Step 1, your page description from Step 2, two or three potential keywords from Step 3, a screenshot of your search results from the single best (your favorite) keyword search, and a super simple spreadsheet of your favorite page titles (or AdWords ads) from just one of your searches using one of your draft keywords.

I know this sound like a lot—but I bet you can do it in 30 minutes.

**See you next week.** Assignment Thirteen. ‘Landing Pages’ to find out exactly how to use these rich keywords that you have unearthed.

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