

FOOD BANK OF THE SOUTHERN TIER
Agency Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
March 13th, 2020

Committee Member	Agency	In Attendance	Unable to Attend
Mary Beth Prechtl	Blessed Sacrament	X	
Les Aylesworth	CHOW/Broome Co Council of Churches		X
Mary Cermak	CHOW-St. Paul's Endicott	X	
Kathy Greene	Addison Community Food Pantry		X
Beth Mooney	Loaves & Fishes		X
Bonnie Hand	TOI- Park Terrace Food Pantry	X	
Alycia Anthony	Tioga County Rural Ministry	X	
Art Berkey	Caroline Food Pantry	X	
Jessamine Stone	Groton Food Providers	X	
Bev Mello	Montour & Watkins MFP	X	
Deb Fry	CCE Chemung	X	
John Ingraham	HPNAP / NYSDOH	X	
Staff			
Natasha Thompson		X	
Amanda Palme		X	
Randi Quackenbush		X	
Kathryn Miller		X	
Matt Griffin		X	
Caroline Tolbert		X	
Jennifer Bertron		X	
Sarah Keenan		X	
Erica Miner		X	
Mary Laurey		X	

Main Agenda Item: Coronavirus response

Questions

- What do you - the partners and agencies – need from the Food Bank?
- Do we anticipate any impact on getting food into the warehouse?
- Are generators available if needed to operate equipment?
- To what extent can agencies increase ordering? Emergency ordering options?
- Will the Food Bank be expanding MFPs?
- Will Catholic Charities be able to increase personal care items?
- What will people who can't work and won't get paid do?
- How do we keep seniors safe – employees/volunteers/clients
- How to make sure we are meeting needs by pre-packaging? How to figure in personal supplies for hygiene and safety? How to get basics to clients?

- The people we are currently serving know about this resource, but what about others who may not be using our services or even know about them, but may need service now (out of work/kids home etc)? How to reach them?
- Keeping an eye on the Federal response? How will we work with county health depts
- What are the best ways to comprehensively and correctly communicate with partners and agencies?
- Is everyone else seeing a decrease in pantry attendance?
- What if Food Bank drivers get sick?

What we Know/What the Food Bank is Doing

- No confirmed cases in any of our counties, but there is a lack of testing. It may be here.
- Working with the Feeding America network and our state and county emergency services around planning and preparedness.
- Food Bank priorities are seniors, families with kids and keeping Mobiles on the road.
- Senior MFPs are transitioning to pre-packaged boxes. Suspending client- choice policy at this time in order to reduce contact and exposure. All Food Bank volunteers are packing these Senior MFP Food Boxes. Will need 1300 boxes to get through 1 month. May start packing Food Boxes for traditional MFPs if we have the volunteers.
- Backpack contacts and school superintendents have been emailed in case schools close. Advised to distribute all Backpack bags before closing. Checking to see if they want additional packs delivered next in anticipation of any potential closings. Also checking to see if they have capacity to distribute Food Boxes similar to what is being sent to Senior MFPs. Family Food Boxes would have enough food for 3 days for a family of 4.
- Capacity to provide senior and family food boxes will depend on volunteer capacity and product availability.
- Keeping an eye on volunteer protocols – mandatory handwashing, 6-10 feet distance between people and sanitizing surfaces with more frequency.
- Working on communications to pantries and other partners:
 - Health and hygiene recommendations for clients and volunteers
 - Policy changes and recommended distribution options
 - Pantry Trak and registration processes **needs to be own, separate communication
 - Survey to determine any site changes – expanded or reduced hours, closings, volunteer needs
- Communications will be sent through Mail Chimp, put on the www.foodbankst.org Partner Portal and directly from Programs and Partnerships Coordinators.
- Working on community level connection to volunteers to support pantries.
- Looking into temporarily suspending JYS classes and Healthy Pantry visits, as well as site visits
- County coalition meetings are cancelled for March and looking at remote options for providing Operation Support Capital Equipment Trainings. March 20th food safety training cancelled.
- Let's not forget that this is what we are designed to do – distribute food in emergencies.

Health and Hygiene Recommendations

- Establish and share guidelines for clients and volunteers
- Based on CDC recommendations
- Fever/cough/not well – DON'T COME IN. This is the paramount communication to both volunteers and clients.
- Clients can send a proxy or let someone know and figure out delivery to car.

- Wash hands
- Clean and sanitize all surfaces – doorknobs, counters, tables etc. Make sure sanitizer is 60 or greater alcohol content and follow instructions for use. Vinegar does not kill this virus.
- Signage available and will be shared electronically and with deliveries.
- There will be spray bottles with sanitizer coming on MFPs – it is mixed at the Food Bank and is food safety grade.
- If accepting food drive donations, consider “quarantine” for 72 hours. Or suspend taking and ask for funds instead.

Policy Changes and Recommended Distribution Options

- Adopt no or low contact distribution methods. Reduce amount of time people are hanging around/congregating.
 - Can suspend client choice and opt for prepacked bags or boxes. Food Bank has bags on order and boxes may be available (ship flat).
 - Home delivery
 - Appointments
 - Drive through options, bring food out to people in their cars
 - If sites want to maintain client choice, consider alternatives:
 - Meet client in parking lot and take order based on what’s available
 - Groton already uses a system where people have a time slot based on the first letter of their last name. Rotate who is first based on grouping. ABCD names are first slot at 5-5:15, next distribution they are last slot. Helps reduce number of people waiting and amount of time they are there for and everyone gets a chance to be first.
 - Consider choice ahead of time by email or phone. Can have bags/boxes ready for pick up at arrival.
 - Meal sites can use to-go containers. Food Bank is looking for to-go containers.
 - Important to continue using Pantry Trak to the best of our ability during these adjustments. Paper registration and intake forms are an option. If it’s difficult to read hand writing, volunteer verbally get info and write it down. Per John Ingraham with HPNAP, this is a declared State of Emergency and providing services is more important than taking names. However, Federal Government will want verification of service if it comes for emergency funding services. Name, DOB and phone number at a minimum if there is an extreme situation. More communication will be coming.
- Be generous – consider possibilities of quarantine. 5-day package instead of 3-day.
- Stock up pantries. Food Bank is connecting with donors. Hoping to raise money for emergency boxes and extra food. Don’t worry too much about financial implications – we will be in touch.
- Trucks are on the road making deliveries as usual. If you need food sooner or deliveries are impacted by CDL drivers getting sick – self pick-up is available at the Food Bank. Still need to place order two-days in advance - unless it is a big emergency (talk to your PPC about it).

Food Bank Menu

- Gloves and bar soap are ordered and on the way – will notify when it hits the menu
- Looking to to-go containers for meal sites
- There is interest in toilet paper, hand sanitizer, Clorox wipes, easy meal options for kids. Possibly dish and clothing detergent. Caroline will look for these items at reasonable prices.

Ongoing Communications/Changes

- Partners need to let Food Bank/Programs and Partnerships Coordinators know any changes to distributions – more/less hours and closings especially.
- Food Bank will update Food Finder on website and post on Facebook. Our message to the public is to check Food Finder, but call ahead to be sure.
- Need for a list of closed pantries and partners – can be posted on website and shared with news.

Update from HPNAP

- Seniors are the priority because they are most susceptible.
- If schools close, USDA has approved plans for waiver so kids can go to school and get fed or can take up to 2 meals home to eat - waiving the congregate meal requirement.
- Things are fluid and constantly changing. Policies may be updated within days. Federal govt is working on compensation packages for people who will have reduced hours or not working. Tax incentives, temporary relief and automatic food stamps. Also pandemic
- Food banks and emergency food programs are considered essential services in a state of emergency. If county emergency management is enacted, contact them and we will be able to be part of that plan.

Operation Support Capital Equipment Trainings and Coalitions

- All March events and meetings are cancelled – including coalition meetings where training for Operational Support/Capital Equipment.
- Considerations for alternatives to training:
 - Hold something in person in April
 - Virtual training – using pantry trak model Kathryn created
 - Phone calls
- HPANP should be sending template to the Food Bank by Monday. Very little changing for agencies. Food Bank website will be updated by the following Monday

Next Steps

1. Randi and team will finalize agency communication and send out through Mail Chimp. Staff will also be making calls.
2. Will be a follow up communication specific to Pantry Trak protocols. Sites should contact Kathryn directly to work through any questions or issues.
3. Agency Advisory Reps will follow up with emails to their coalitions
4. Caroline will be looking for reasonable prices and availability of toilet paper, hand sanitizer, Clorox wipes, easy meal options for kids, dish and clothing detergent.
5. If anyone gets direct communications from county emergency management, share back to the Food Bank so we know.
6. Schedule a follow-up virtual check-in in a few weeks through Zoom to share updates