

## Talking Points from Wednesday's (3/18) Feed My People Conference Call

1. THANK YOU to everyone for paying attention, for caring about your communities, and for finding ways to provide groceries to people in different ways.
  - a. Your commitment speaks to the dedication you have to your communities and for your mission in eliminating hunger
  - b. It's easier to manage stresses when you can control some things - but most of what's happening is outside of our control, and it's changing quickly
  - c. Your reassurance will help alleviate some of the uncertainty for your clients and guests
  
2. THANK YOU for helping to keep people safe. We continue to monitor recommendations from CDC, our local health departments, other agencies.
  - a. Wash your hands!
  - b. Sanitize thoroughly
  - c. Limit contact and gatherings
  - d. Stay home and away from others if you don't feel well.
  - e. Take care of your volunteers (and YOU, if you're vulnerable).
  
3. Feed My People Food Bank remains committed to providing food to you throughout this time, following our regular order and delivery schedules.
  - a. What can we do to help?
    - i. Pre-packed boxes?
      1. We will have plenty – you may not be handing out as much, or any, if you're prepacking.
      2. How can you keep produce moving into your community – it's healthy, we have it, can you bag it?
    - ii. Health Meal Kits
    - iii. Produce
  
4. We don't know what might happen - we have no crystal ball.
  - a. We have plenty of food in our warehouse at this time. It's full.
  - b. We continue to receive deliveries.
  - c. We may not have exactly what you want, or exactly what you have ordered in the past, but all indications are we will have food!
  - d. Assure your clients and guests, (your community) you will be available
    - i. People are fearful of the unknown – what might happen?
    - ii. People are fearful if they believe there will be scarcity – see the toilet paper frenzy!
    - iii. Your reassurance matters and can help calm those fears.
  
5. Communicating changes is important
  - a. Facebook, radio, church bulletins, posters on the doors, other places in your community to notify your clientele about changes
  - b. If people know what's changing before it happens they can often adjust more easily
  - c.

## 6. Pantries

- a. Many are packing boxes and bags to distribute in a 'drive-thru' fashion or with limited contact in your waiting areas.
- b. Collecting minimal information – getting a count for statistics is important
- c. Volunteers – needs and availability may change in the next few weeks
  - i. Communication is important
  - ii. Kids out of school may be more available
  - iii. Be aware of your vulnerable volunteers – and if it's you, please take time away
- d. Adjust and make changes as you go, based on your resources
- e. Hunger is never just about food. It often is part of other vulnerabilities – and this is a time that economic vulnerabilities are being revealed quickly
  - i. Clientele may have different or additional need (kids home from school, not working, other changes to their households)
  - ii. Some clients (elderly) may need delivery or other options to receive food
- f. Monitor your community needs – consider extra distribution sites and times
- g. Registration and statistics – do the best you can
- h. TEFAP pantries – look for more guidance from the state contacts

## 7. School programs

- a. We expect responses to vary as districts react differently - each program should decide what works for them.
- b. Will there be meals available from the schools?
  - i. Can you partner to have someone available or would school personnel be available to help distribute food to families
- c. Some districts are running buses on the route to deliver meals.
  - i. Could bags be delivered, too? What would be needed to make that happen?
- d. One pantry is offering a 'pop up' boxed distribution at the schools
- e. Again, needs may vary with kids not receiving daily school lunches and/or parents not working

## 8. Meal sites

- a. Offer take-out meals where possible
- b. If not possible, offer staggered mealtimes so there are fewer people congregating at one time
- c. Maintain good food safety at all times. If serving a cooked, hot meal, remind people to eat it soon after they receive it, or encourage proper refrigeration or freezing.

## 9. Questions/Comments

### **Q. Is Feed My People at risk of running out of food?**

No. Inventory remains high and all distribution to our warehouse remains the same. Nothing otherwise has been communicated from our rescue partners or suppliers. Please continue to distribute produce – it's especially helpful during this time to improve health.

**Q. How are programs conducting their food pantry?**

Many programs are moving from free choice to pre-boxed, pre-bagged, or an order form dependent on inventory. Smaller programs (like Bridge to Hope) are contacting their clients ahead of time, taking down their order based on their household size and what's currently in the Bridge to Hope pantry, and then staff are "shopping" the pantry for these items, packaging it up, and placing it in a no contact area for client pickup. Larger pantries are conducting "curbside pickup" or "drive-thru" methods so guests can drive up, and a volunteer approaches the vehicle with prepackaged boxes or bags of food in a cart. The guest then loads the food up themselves.

**Q. When packing bags or boxes, how much food should be put in there?**

Remember that as a supplemental food source, any food that people receive will not meet all their daily needs. Boxes packed for distribution in Eau Claire have been packed to serve 2 people as a supplement to their food supply. Boxes contain things like pasta, sauce, canned vegetables, and a few snacks. Families will also receive a bag of produce that may include potatoes, onions, pears or carrots. Families with 3-5 people in the household will receive 2 non-perishable boxes. Families with more than 5 people will receive 3 non-perishable boxes.

**Q. What extra safety measures should go into food handling at this time?**

Do your best to implement additional sanitizing and social distancing procedures for your clientele, staff, and volunteers.

- Wash your hands.
- Sanitize all contact surfaces as often as possible
- Minimize the number of volunteers at any one time
- Minimize contact with clientele

See other information the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention resources for community and faith-based leaders: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/index.html>

**Q. What is the best way to record statistics and other client information to help reduce wait time and minimize contact?**

FMP only requires the number of people in a household and how many children (under 18), adults (18-59) and seniors (60+) are living in that household. TEFAP Pantries need additional guidance from TEFAP on what exceptions may be made (if any) during this time. In the meantime, do your best to gather what information you can and have guests come in at a better, later time to fill out any additional paperwork as needed. Keep the pen and paperwork in one volunteer or staff's hand to further curb contact. Pre-weigh boxes/bags if possible.

**Q. Should pantries be accepting bags from community members?**

Do this at your own discretion. Best practice is to not accept bags currently. If you need bags, contact retailers in your area to ask if they can donate bags to reduce risk. Plastic bags are available from FMP on the order form. Boxes may be available at a cost.

**Q. Is Kwik Trip still accepting vouchers?**

At this time, Kwik Trip is still accepting vouchers. Their self-serve stations have closed, but their milk, produce, etc. is all still available.

**Q. How can programs serve people if they are quarantined and unable to have face to face contact?**

Ideas include contacting the person ahead of time and letting them know when they can expect their food to be delivered. May leave it in a specific spot, such as their front doorstep. Advise them that volunteers will not be taking anything directly into their home.

**Q. Is Family Fare still donating?**

Family Fare, and all other retail stores, are continuing to donate unless otherwise communicated.

**Q. Can programs/agencies come to FMP on short notice?**

We ask that to the best of your program's ability, to stick to the ordering deadline. Pick up from the warehouse can occur Monday through Friday between 9AM-4:30PM.

**Q. Is mobile food distribution from Feed My People available?**

Please contact Michelle at 715-835-9415 ext. 110 if you have a specific request. FMP is hosting a "drive-thru" distribution at 2 locations in Eau Claire today and 3/20 with more events to come. Visit [give.fmpfoodbank.org/covid19](http://give.fmpfoodbank.org/covid19) for details.

**Q. Do programs want pre-packaged produce and non-perishables made available from FMP?**

Several programs do want these options available. Please watch your inboxes and the order form. Healthy Meal Kits will continue to be packed and available.