

September 16, 2020

Dear Agency Partners,

We will host the next call on **WEDNESDAY, September 30** at 10:00 am.

Call in Number - (267) 930-4000 Passcode 789-222-531#

September is Hunger Action Month!

- Feeding America recognizes September as Hunger Action Month, a nation-wide campaign to end hunger
- **THANK YOU** for sending your pictures – keep them coming!
- **ORANGE** is the color of hunger action – send your pictures of staff or volunteers with oranges or something orange to susie@fmpfoodbank.org

OR

- Text your picture to Nick at 715.450-2656

ALL THINGS VOLUNTEERS!

A number of agency partners joined the call to talk about their experience with their volunteers since the COVID-19 outbreak. See notes from their discussion below:

Barb from the Hayward Food Shelf

- The Food Shelf moved registration outside in April and has decided to continue outside registration and distribution through the winter. They had a donor who offered to pay for a 'shelter' for their volunteers and found a shed to move to the property.
- The program prepacks most items. They obtain boxes to pack in from Uline.
- They lost 1/3 of their volunteers in the spring but once they realized they would be protected and have limited contact with people they have come back.
- The Food Shelf has a volunteer coordinator. Volunteers fill out an application, get a tour and training. There is a volunteer handbook and volunteers decide where they'd like to start and are usually trained in 2 volunteer jobs so the Food Shelf has some flexibility. Articles in the paper created new volunteer opportunities. Articles in the local paper invited new volunteer candidates during this time.
- The Food Shelf used to send a newsletter once a quarter and at the end of the year. Now, weekly updates are provided by email keeping everyone in the loop.
- Most volunteers come because they hear about it from other volunteers.

Tina from St. Francesca Resource Center, Chippewa Falls

- Their volunteer corps stayed mostly the same with the exception of those who were concerned for their health due to age. Volunteers are very dedicated, and are offered time off, but they have all continued.
- The program has about 20 active volunteers. They are scheduled and can come every other week. People call and volunteer – have not advertised.
- The resource center is using curbside distribution and finding they do not need as many volunteers to distribute this way.

Marge from St. Vincent de Paul, Phillips

- This program also has a dedicated core of 20-25 active volunteers (some every week, some less often). Most of the volunteers are 65 or older. One couple (in their 90s) haven't volunteered since March.
- Registration happens outside, boxes are packed by 5-6 volunteers and packed boxes are taken out to the clients.
- Several men help with order delivery – many are husbands of the women volunteers.
- Everyone is getting tired and would like to get back to 'normal'.
- The president of the Society of SVdP approached the local clergy association and asked for additional volunteers.

Jill – of Stepping Stones of Dunn Co, Menomonie about 100 volunteers

- The pantry used to be client choice but SS is now using curbside delivery. Shelves were moved from the pantry and tables are being used. Food is being packed and delivered to cars. No clients are allowed in the building at this time.
- They used to pack food in boxes, but it became more than they could keep up with so they are now packing in plastic bags.
- The pantry is running 2 volunteer shifts, 11-1 and 1-3pm, 6 people per shift – jobs are bagging bakery, dry goods, meats, produce, deli separately
- The pantry used to distribute 6 days per week but the days were reduced to take some pressure off staff and volunteers.
- One person does the intake and provides the family size (1-4 people per set of bags) to volunteers inside the pantry who place bags in a grocery cart and deliver the cart to the car. This streamlined process reduces the number of people in the building at one time.
- When the pandemic began, Stepping Stones lost almost all of the volunteers because they were elderly or had health conditions. They've had many NEW volunteers since then. People came to them (laid off or wanted to help) and asked if they could help. Some knew other volunteers. They also advertised on FaceBook.
- People are matched with someone they can relate to – this is also a social opportunity. Halfway through they offer a break/snack – the goal is to have a positive experience for everyone.
- The pantry is tracking (using a database) all who come in (for contact tracing in case someone is exposed).
- Stepping Stones works with a local senior program (CESA) providing volunteers who need work experience – one lady comes in 20 hours per week and another will start in October.

Linda – Cochrane Fountain City

- This is a small program so a few volunteers make it work.
- The program initially lost volunteer help but now have had some come back.
- To fill in the gaps requests were made in the church newsletter and on FaceBook. Word of mouth has helped recruit.

Other Suggestions and Questions

- Volunteer sourcing
 - Some volunteers are available through the CESA program through the local Job Center,
 - RSVP (retired senior volunteer program) through Western Dairyland – those over 70 were asked to hold because of COVID-19, but they are still offering volunteers.
 - Word of mouth – when someone can't come they find someone to take their place.
- What happens if you have to shut down because someone is sick or someone was exposed?
- Is anyone allowing clients in to the pantry/program? What is your protocol?

- How do you show appreciation to your volunteers? How can you help with burn out?
- How do you help a volunteer move on from your program?

Farmer to Families Boxes

- This is a USDA federal grant program that helps buy agricultural products and put them into the emergency food system (helps agricultural producers and helps hungry people).
- As it continues, the program is changing. Products will be different.
- There may be a lag in our receipt of these boxes, so for a time where there won't be any.
- We're not sure what we'll be getting in the next part of the program – we'll let you know as soon as we know.

XCEL Energy Update

- Crisis funds are still available until September 30th for people impacted by COVID 19.
- The new year's Energy Assistance program begins October 1st. New income guidelines are in place so some who have not qualified in the past may qualify this year.
- XCEL has not been disconnecting electricity or natural gas during this pandemic and the annual moratorium begins soon and lasts until next spring.
- You may contact your local utility company to find out about assistance programs in your communities.
- PLEASE encourage people to contact their local energy company (co-op, municipal, whatever they have) The companies want to work with people to help pay their bills and keep them out of danger of disconnection.

FoodShare Updates

- Because WI declared a public health emergency for September, WI DHS is able to provide FoodShare households with the maximum monthly benefit amount based on the number of eligible people in their households. *THIS COULD BE RENEWED MONTHLY.*
- The Federal Government announced new 2021 monthly income limits for FoodShare eligibility. These new limits go into effect October 1, 2020. **Income limits have gone up - those who may not have been eligible in the past may be eligible now.**
- Nick and Maureen are receiving many referrals from flyers! Please continue to encourage people to call if they may be eligible.
- If you are in Barron, Washburn, Sawyer, Rusk, Pepin, or Price Counties, please encourage people to call or text **Maureen Wilson at (715) 496-3121**. If in other counties, contact is **Nick Bursaw at (715) 450-2656**. They are both available to help people apply for benefits and to answer questions.

School Lunch Program Update

- The USDA announced an extension to the free summer meal program through December 31, 2020.
- Schools in the Food and Nutrition Service and the Summer Food Service Program have meals paid for through the end of the year (or until funding runs out). This means participating schools may continue to serve free meals to all students, allow free meals to be served outside the typical group settings and meal times, and allowing parents and guardians to pick up meals for their children.
- Please check with your local school district to see if they are participating.

DATCP Grants: Food Security Initiative

- Feed My People applied for grants through Feeding WI and was awarded about half of what was requested. You should be hearing from one of us soon, if you haven't already!
- We are applying for others grants, also, to benefit our partner programs.

Feed My People Safety Protocol and Recommendations to our Partners

To maximize the safety of staff and volunteers, and to ensure we are able to provide the service you rely on, Feed My People has implemented new protocols.

- Office staff is working in teams alternately working in the office and from home. Warehouse staff continue to work onsite 5 days a week.
- FMP staff and volunteers are all wearing **masks** while in our building and on official FMP business.
 - We have reduced the amount of people in our building, suspending parts of our volunteer program and have greatly limited the number of people in our building. This may result in some products taking longer to be available.
 - Food donations are being placed in a bin just inside our door or taken directly to the warehouse.
 - Agency pick-up goes directly to door 10 and calls to let us know they are here. Our warehouse staff then brings the food out to them.
- We have a sanitizing protocol we continue to follow throughout the building.

We recommend:

- Continue to maintain social distancing (encourage your staff and volunteers to do the same both when working with your program and when they're away)
- Wear a mask, wash your hands and don't touch your face
- Sanitize workspaces and common areas frequently (surfaces, doorknobs, bathrooms, etc.)
- Stay home if you don't feel well.

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