

September 30, 2020

Dear Agency Partners,

We will host the next call on **WEDNESDAY, October 14** at 10:00 am.

Call in Number - (267) 930-4000

Passcode 789-222-531#

Special Guest: Rick Sorenson, FMP Warehouse Manager will join the call to present news from the warehouse, including our new freezer.

Feel free to send your questions ahead of time, or especially if you are unable to be on the call.

LAST CHANCE: 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 – we'll still be glad to receive them in October.
- **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**

TEFAP NEWS – Guidance from the State of WI

- **For TEFAP Programs:** Wisconsin TEFAP will temporarily suspend the annual “recertification” that requires you verify participant addresses at least annually. This has also served as an opportunity to adjust the names and numbers of persons in households. COVID-19 conditions make this difficult for you to do safely for all your households and you have the option to forego the practice for now. TEFAP will notify you in advance of required resumption.
- **What does this mean for FMP?** We do not expect our non-TEFAP partners to re-register clients or to complete a new registration for clients of your program, nor do we prohibit you from doing so. We want you to ensure the safety of your staff, volunteers, and your clients.
- **FOR TEFAP Programs:** “No Contact” food distribution continues to be necessary; Wisconsin is experiencing record numbers of reported COVID-19 cases. As a result, yesterday Governor Evers issued a new Emergency Order. The growth in cases is “nearly exponential” and more and more evidence is showing that for some patients, the disease may have lasting negative effects on the brain, heart, lungs, and circulatory system. Fatalities among seniors and people with disabilities remains constant – and food pantries are especially vulnerable for these reasons. *At the same time, this is Wisconsin, and we understand cold weather is coming and we need to recognize and adjust to that challenge.* Please plan to continue “No Contact” outdoor distribution *at least an additional month*, through October 31, 2020. Our plan is to share updated instruction with you next month so you are prepared for any changes beginning November 1, 2020. Please reach out to your EFO if you need to discuss any related matters.
- **What does this mean for FMP?** Again, FMP wants you to ensure the safety of your staff, volunteers, and your clients. Please proceed with caution. You know your situation and your community best.

NEW! 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).
- FMP is receiving new boxes each week through the month of October
- The boxes are about 30# each and contain products that require refrigeration.
- Each box contains:
 - 30# boxes of mixed food – it's all refrigerated product
 - 10 lbs. of Fruits and Vegetables (at least one of each)
 - 5 lbs. of Meat Pre-cooked (likely chicken or pork)
 - 5 lbs. of Dairy (cultured and cheese)
 - 1 Gallon of Fluid Milk
- You may open and distribute items separately or provide an entire box to a household. This may help you with prepacking for drive through or contactless distribution.

Rising Grocery Prices: As you may be aware, grocery prices have risen throughout the pandemic. Here is an article about the rise in the cost of groceries.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/08/04/grocery-prices-unemployed/>

XCEL Energy/Utilities Update

- 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

- We do not have information about expanded benefits for October at this time.
- Because WI declared a public health emergency for September, WI DHS will provide FoodShare households with the maximum monthly benefit amount based on the number of eligible people in their households.
- 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.

Safety of our partners

We have had a couple of agencies report that volunteers or others have been exposed to people who have tested positive for COVID-19. We appreciate the care and concern they have for the people associated with their programs and the steps they have taken (including quarantining, sanitizing, and closing for a period of time) to ensure everyone remains safe.

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 can 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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