

# COVID-19 Emerging and Preparedness Practices

## Last Updated: 03.13.2020

*While the media has reported greater at-risk factors for COVID-19 among the general population, such as age (60+) and pre-existing health conditions (see VULNERABLE POPULATIONS for specifics), it is important for all of us to remember that the people we serve may be more susceptible to this virus, due to lesser access to adequate health care and treatment, lower resistance or compromised immune systems, stigma or bias, or lack of information about proper prevention and care.*

*Food banks are a trusted community resource. Your efforts to provide nourishment to vulnerable populations during this time of heightened anxiety, to ensure that we treat all people with respect and dignity, and to convey accurate information – especially to help protect the people we serve – is essential to your community's health.*

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As Feeding America monitors the developments related to COVID-19 (coronavirus), we have been tracking the following preparedness Practices emerging from members food banks, state associations and FANO staff. These Practices center on protecting the well-being of our staff members and people facing hunger during this public health threat.

These Practices are emergent and will evolve as we learn more together. They have been reviewed by the Feeding America Government Relations and Member Engagement Teams to verify they meet IRS and member contract requirements.

We will update these Practices on an ongoing basis as food banks and state associations share information via a COVID-19 PRACTICES SURVEY TOOL that is under development. Each section is dated indicating when it was last updated.

**Please note: Evolving guidance provided by the [CDC](#) and Public Health Departments will take precedent over the information provided here. We recommend monitoring these authoritative sources regularly.**

If you have questions, please reach out to your Member Engagement Director (formerly Compliance & Capability Director). They are on hand to assist you.

Thank you to ALL members who have and will contribute to this critical shared resource as we meet this new challenge. We are deeply grateful for your involvement and the input we've received from across the network thus far. We are Better Together!

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## 1. CONTINGENCY PLANNING TOOLS:

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### *What Contingency Planning suggestions and tools are available?*

*Updated 03/10/2020*

- Review [Sample Critical Functions Planning from Food Lifeline](#)
- Review [Sample Coronavirus Emergency Planning Action Items for Teams](#)
- Review [Sample Communications to Staff](#)
- Review [Sample Daily Cleaning Program](#)
- Review [Member Continuity of Operations Plan Guidance Template](#)
- Review your food bank's Disaster Response Policy and Plan
- Stay attuned to [statements issued by the CDC](#)
- Tabletop Exercise for Pandemic Response – *Coming Soon from FANO*
- COVID-19 Daily Situation Report – *Available by Wednesday, 03/11/2020*

We suggest establishing an internal response team cutting across all departments. Give each team member specific tasks and ensure that at least two people are fully knowledgeable of every responsibility.

- Establish your food bank's authoritative source for guidance and monitor that source:
  - CDC- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
  - Local & State Public Health Departments
- Educate all employees about the virus and how it spreads based on information from your authoritative source.
- Review attendance and sick leave policies with staff members. Consider contingency plans and whether you will make exceptions to the rules and what triggers those exceptions such as school closures impacting employees with children.
- Communicate available health benefits including telehealth options. If you are unsure if your medical plans offer telemedicine, contact your provider.
- Develop an assignment sheet of who covers whom during an absence.
- Establish a method for accounting for all employees and volunteers. For example, a phone/text tree.
- Develop a protocol for suspending your operation and or closing your facility.
- Communicate preparedness planning with the Board of Directors Executive Committee.
- Review scenarios in the event staffing levels and volunteer attendance decrease by 25% and 50%. Determine programmatic priorities based on these varying staffing levels.

## 2. DISASTER RESPONSE OUTREACH

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*With which disaster partners should my food bank or state association establish a point of contact?*

*Updated 03.08.2020*

- State or local Emergency Management Agencies
- Local or state health departments
- Local school systems\*\*
- Department of Health & Human Services
- Salvation Army, Red Cross, state and local VOAD's
- National Guard
- City, county, state officials

*\*\*Schools: With schools in impacted areas closing, food banks should coordinate with school systems to ensure meals are provided to children outside of school hours. This will likely be led by the school systems, but in other disasters when schools have been closed food banks have provided lunches through the Summer Food Service Program's "seamless summer" option, which allows for providing school lunch in non-school settings when there are sudden school closures.*

## 3. MEDIA RESPONSES & TALKING POINTS

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*What messaging should be used for media requests?*

*Updated 03.12.2020*

Feeding America issued a statement in response to a reporter's inquiry about the coronavirus on March 2, 2020:

*"Feeding America food banks are trusted, community organizations, and they are committed to serving people in need, wherever they are.*

*"Feeding America is carefully monitoring developments regarding the global spread of COVID-19 (coronavirus). A Coronavirus Contingency Planning Task Force, led by the Feeding America Disaster Services team and leaders from member food banks across the nation, was formed last week. This Task Force is actively supporting local food banks, as they prepare to continue their operations and distribute food to the people and communities they serve, as is done with other emergencies. Feeding America is also actively consulting with FEMA, National VOAD, the USDA and leveraging other partners who are in a position to support measures to ensure access to food for the most vulnerable members of our communities during this situation.*

*"The strength of Feeding America is the network of 200 food banks located throughout the country. When food banks are impacted by an emergency, the network is there to help with food*

*and other relief supplies, with staff and transportation support, and with coordination and expertise."*

➤ **MEDIA FAQ**

The document below includes potential media questions and responses surrounding COVID-19 preparedness and planning.

- [COVID-19 FAQ From Media](#)

➤ **TALKING POINTS**

The document below includes talking points covering high level information, food bank operations, and client support.

- [Coronavirus Talking Points](#)

## 4. STAFF HEALTH & WELLBEING

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*How are members protecting the health and well-being of their teams?*

*Updated 03/11/2020*

Some member food banks are establishing the following protocols to ensure people do not enter their facilities who are exhibiting symptoms or have traveled to impacted regions.

➤ **STAFF COMMUNICATION**

The document below provides an example of Food Lifeline's all-staff communications on their response plan, including a travel policy. More communication/policy examples are under the Policy section below.

- [COVID-19 Initial Plan and Response Staff Communication](#)

➤ **SIGNAGE:**

Post additional signage at your facilities to remind staff and visitors of personal hygiene practices. Thanks to the **Boston Area Food Bank** for sharing this [signage template example](#).

➤ **CLEANING /HYGIENE: TAKE THE FOLLOWING PRECAUTIONS.**

- **Cleaning Supplies:** Stock 3- 6 months of cleaning supplies and personal hygiene items for internal use including wipes, paper towels, hand sanitizers (that contain 60%-95% alcohol), liquid soaps (no bars), disinfectants, gloves, tissues, disposable facemasks for use if an employee or visitor becomes ill while in the facility.

**Members have learned that some cleaning solutions are not effective against COVID-19. They have swapped to Bleach and Water in warehouse and production spaces.** Members should check to make sure that the cleaning supplies they are using will kill COVID-19.

- **Hygiene Kit Distributions:** Distribute hygiene kits to drivers including gloves, wipes, tissues, hand sanitizers, etc.
- **Visitor Waivers:** Ask volunteers to sign waivers indicating they have neither traveled to impacted regions in the last 14 days nor are experiencing symptoms of illness. If they have traveled to impacted areas, please share that out of an abundance of caution and food safety concerns, we ask that they not volunteer today. They will qualify to volunteer after they are symptom free for 14 days since their return date.

**As the situation is evolving, monitor the CDC for the latest information about travel concerns, large gatherings, and people most vulnerable to infection.**

Have a plan to stay updated on CDC guidance.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html> and

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

- **Close traditional drinking water fountains:** Direct staff to water coolers with single use cups or bottled water.
- **Hand Sanitizing Stations & Tissues:** Install additional hand sanitizing stations at all entrances and throughout your facility. Make tissues boxes readily available. The best method for preventing contamination is hand-washing with soap for 20 seconds rinsing with hot water. Hand sanitizer stations should NOT be used in lieu of hand-washing. If you do not have access to soap and water, alcohol-based hand sanitizers that contain 60%-95% alcohol can be used as an alternative, but soap and water is the first choice. It is especially important to clean hands after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose. If you cough or sneeze, please cover your nose and mouth with a tissue and throw tissues away in trash baskets.

#### ➤ **IN THE EVENT OF AN EMPLOYEE TESTING POSITIVE FOR COVID-19**

**If you have an employee or volunteer that test positive for COVID-19 you will need to immediately contact your local health department for guidance.** It is important to note that COVID-19 is a respiratory virus and the main mode of transmission is through respiratory droplets (person to person) and not from touching inanimate objects. The local health department will need to know who has had close contact that the person who tested positive

while they were at the food bank. The local health department would provide guidance on the disposition of any food products that may have been handled by the COVID-19 positive employee/volunteer.

➤ **SOCIAL DISTANCING:**

Educate staff to greet others with a wave rather than handshake. The CDC recommends a distance of six feet when possible.

➤ **RETURN TO WORK:**

You may want to consider strengthening your return to work policy and ask for a medical return to work slip for anyone with a fever.

➤ **CLEANING SCHEDULE:**

Increase the frequency and intensity of cleaning and sanitizing schedules of restrooms, breakrooms, volunteer areas, including routinely disinfecting frequently touched surfaces (door handles, counters, railings, shared keyboard, phones, etc.)

Please see the [example of an intensified cleaning schedule from Food Lifeline](#). If you are unsure your cleaning products are effective against pathogens associated with COVID-19, use bleach and water.

*Thank you to member food banks in the **Feeding Texas State Association and FANO HR and food safety staff** who contributed to these shared these practices.*

➤ **TELECOMMUTING:**

The core functions of food banks require onsite staffing. Some member food banks such as the **San Antonio Food Bank** are testing work from home protocols for certain roles should they be needed. Tests include internet/phone connectivity and access to drives/servers. **Please visit the [Telecommuting & Virtual Meeting](#) section for more guidance**

➤ **TRAVEL:**

FANO has instituted a business travel suspension through March 31. This decision was made out of an abundance of caution and prioritizes the health of all staff engaged throughout our network – ensuring we have the time we need to effectively prepare for and respond to any potential scenarios that may face the people and communities we are proud to serve. Previously scheduled FANO gatherings planned for the month of March will either continue via teleconference, be re-scheduled or be canceled altogether.

The travel suspension will be re-visited as more information emerges about the spread and severity of this virus. We will provide an update to this policy on **Friday, March 27**, based on our assessment of the situation at that time.

➤ **DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL QUARANTINES:**

FANO has also instituted the following policy for its staff. It may serve as a model for you.

“For employees who are traveling internationally for personal reasons to or through a country that has been designated with a Level 2 or 3 travel notice, we ask that you work from home for 14 days upon your return. Currently countries with Alert Level 2 or 3 travel notice include China, Iran, Italy, Japan, and South Korea. Countries that are identified as Watch Level 1 notices include Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, and Taiwan. If you would like to work from home for 14 days after travel to/through these countries, Feeding America would be supportive, but it is not required. **Please notify your supervisor/human resource department of any international travel.** Consult the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html) for travel advisories. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

For employees who are traveling domestically for personal reasons, there is no quarantine requirement as of 3/7/20. We will continue to monitor CDC guidelines regarding domestic travel and, if restrictions are placed on travel to certain regions or cities, we will implement quarantine guidelines consistent with these restrictions. Although FANO is not restricting personal travel, it has been helpful to know who is traveling internationally in case an outbreak happens while the employee is on vacation.”

➤ **HUMAN RESOURCE POLICIES & MEMOS:**

Review your telecommuting and illness policies with staff. Recent examples of Human Resource Memos are below.

- Short-term Disability: If a food bank has a short-term disability program, it may be helpful to understand how quarantines fit into the elimination period.
- FLSA: Food banks should set up a plan for addressing employees who are uncomfortable coming in to work. It is advisable to review state and federal FLSA to make sure you do not jeopardize exempt status if exempt employees are not paid.
- [Feeding America Coronavirus/COVID-19 Human Resource Response](#)
- [Feeding America Telecommuting Policy](#)
- [Food Lifeline COVID-19 Initial Plan and Response Staff Communication](#)

## 5. TELECOMMUTING & VIRTUAL MEETING

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### *What are low/no cost tools for telecommuting & virtual meetings?*

Updated 03.13.2020

Web conferencing tools can be useful to communicate and engage with a large number of people at once while maintaining social distancing. For Food Banks that currently do not use these types of services an [FAQ is available](#) to help provide an overview.

Popular services include:

- Zoom
- GoToMeeting
- WebEx

#### ➤ **FREE WEB CONFERENCE TOOL:**

There may be free tools available from national vendors for telecommuting. Several big-name vendors, including Microsoft, Google, Cisco and LogMeIn, are making some of their chat and video-conferencing services free as demand for remote working booms. [Learn more here](#).

#### **Zoom**

Zoom provides modern enterprise video communications, with an easy, reliable cloud platform for video and audio conferencing, collaboration, chat, and webinars across mobile devices, desktops, telephones, and room systems.

#### **Prices:**

- Free: Zoom can be used for free for up to 100 participants with a maximum of 40 min meetings. Screen recordings is enabled in the free version, but cloud sharing is not. A service like Google Drive or Drop Box can be used to share your videos.
- Prices range for adding additional features. See [here](#).

#### **Getting started:**

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362033-Getting-Started-on-Windows-and-Mac>

- Download Zoom here: <https://zoom.us/support/download>
- Getting Started: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362033-Getting-Started-on-Windows-and-Mac>
- People who join your meeting can use a link to “join from their browser” or they can download Zoom onto their computer. If downloading is not an option, use [this link to enable “join from their browser”](#)

Additional tutorials on using Zoom can be found [in this document](#).

## 6. VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

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### *What is being done to protect the health of at-risk populations?*

*Updated 03.12.2020*

Early information out of China, where COVID-19 first started, shows that some people are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. Per the CDC, this includes:

- Older adults
- People who have serious chronic medical conditions like:
  - Heart disease
  - Diabetes
  - Lung disease

If a COVID-19 outbreak happens in your community — an outbreak is when a large number of people suddenly get sick — public health officials may recommend community actions to reduce people’s risk of being exposed to COVID-19. These actions can slow the spread and reduce the impact of disease.

For people at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 because of age or a serious long-term health problem, it is extra important to take actions to reduce the risk of contracting the virus.

## 7. INVENTORY / SUPPLIES

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### *What supply preparations are members taking?*

*Updated 03.08.2020*

Many members are building the following supplies to prepare for possible quarantines or reduction in staffing/volunteer levels:

- Additional mobile pantry and senior food boxes to distribute to vulnerable households in advance of a quarantine and/or decreased food bank capacity. These households have pre-qualified for TEFAP and/or donated food.
- 14-day non-perishable food boxes for families of four.
- Hygiene bags/boxes if available.

## 8. RETAIL & OTHER PRODUCT SOURCING

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### *How are members adjusting retail sourcing operations?*

*Updated 03.08.2020*

Retail, Food Service and Local Donor donations show a direct correlation between local donor visits and donation yields. If you are unable to continue regular onsite donor visits or need to reduce the number of visits, think about alternative methods of communication.

- Let your donor contacts know that you will be maintaining donation pickups but may be reducing face-to-face visits temporarily. That you will be reaching out to them via phone, email, text and flyers via drivers to stay in touch. Many retailers are hard to reach by phone and email so alternative methods may be the best approach.
  - Set up a calendar of donor communication methods bi-weekly or monthly.
  - Try to capture manager and receivers cell phone numbers.
- Let them know that their donations are still vital those in need.
- If using enabled agencies or volunteers who decide to suspend pickups, make them aware that there may be disruption in service, and you will communicate any disruptions to them if they occur.
  - Ask them for key contact names to communicate service disruptions.

Feeding America is reaching out to national donor contacts with similar information and asking them to reinforce the donation program and guidelines to local personnel.

FANO is in touch with national retail donors about contingency plans related to retail pick-ups in the event of the following:

- Enabled agencies or volunteers curtailing pickups.
- Food banks reducing volunteer shifts and are unable to process the same volume of retail pickups.
- A store employee tests positive for COVID-19. FANO is also in touch with national retail donors about contingency plans related to retail pick-ups and the COVID-19 developments.

### *What if agencies need to curtail or stop retail pickups?*

*Updated 03.13.2020*

If agencies stop or curtail pick-ups, MealConnect has a new feature that may help manage the situation. **Please review the [Manage Missed Pickups Guide](#).**

**Below is a short protocol.**

1. An agency calls to say they cannot perform a pickup.
2. Your food bank posts the open pickup on MealConnect.
3. MealConnect starts alerting other agencies of the opportunity, either sequentially or all at once, depending on what you prefer.
4. Another agency “claims” the pickup, performs it, then receipts it in MealConnect.
5. When the original agency is able to resume pickups, you can switch the responsibility back to them.
6. See [this guide](#) for how to use this new feature.

### *How are food donors are preparing to respond to COVID-19?*

*Updated 03.10.2020*

To learn how our food donors are preparing to respond to COVID-19, please review the [Food Donors – Food Manufacturers Pandemic Planning document](#). Please note, this document is not to be shared publicly, it is for internal use only.

### *What if a retailer reports an employee with a confirmed case of COVID-19?*

*Updated 03.08.2020*

Should a store employee test positive for COVID-19, enact your recall protocols **and out of abundance of caution, discard any product that is identified from the affected store.**

Suspend pick-ups at that retail store and **then** consult with your local health department for next steps.

## **9. USE OF DONATED/PURCHASED/TEFAP PRODUCT**

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### *What food sources are available for residents potentially impacted?*

*Updated 03.12.2020*

#### ➤ **DONATED FOOD:**

IRS Code 170 e (3) defines allowable uses of food donations for the care of people who are ill, needy or infants (a minor child as determined under the laws of jurisdiction in which the child resides). If someone is quarantined due to illness or due to self-quarantine precautions, they would technically qualify for donated food products.

Please note, however, that the IRS’s intent is for donated products to go widely for the care of “the ill, needy, or infants” and one group is not given preference over another. Although it is

possible that individuals that do not usually identify as food insecure could need food assistance during a quarantine situation, food banks will need to carefully consider how to ensure both the food insecure and those that are newly in need due to a pandemic situation can be served. According to IRS definitions, a “needy” person is one who lacks the necessities of life, involving physical, mental, or emotional well-being, as a result of poverty or temporary distress. A resident who cannot work because the child’s school is closed and is without pay would qualify as in need due to distress.

[Hourly workers](#) also can be impacted more than the general population—not being able to do their work from home, not having access sick days or not being able to financially afford to take time off work, often fearing negative repercussions. Additionally, during the COVID-19 outbreak, certain industries (travel, hospitality, entertainment venues) will be adversely impacted by large event postponements or cancellations, leading to lay-offs for low-wage and hourly workers and, therefore, an increased need.

➤ **FEDERAL COMMODITIES:**

Some food streams require additional qualifications (CSFP, TEFAP, etc.). Interviews and signatures (if needed) can be conducted online (phone or video), but you may have to seek state approval for electronic methods.

States can establish procedures for TEFAP distribution – both frequency and amount per distribution. The federal guidelines mandate “at least monthly”. There is great latitude. Food banks can contact state agencies to discuss what TEFAP distribution schedule they want to propose using to respond to community needs.

➤ **PURCHASED PRODUCT:**

Using purchased food would eliminate questions about client qualifications but also significantly raise costs.

➤ **WAIVERS:**

All U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) programs – including the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)](#); Special Nutrition Program for [Women, Infants, and Children \(WIC\)](#); and the [National School Lunch](#) and [Breakfast Programs](#) – have flexibilities and contingencies built-in to allow them to respond to on-the-ground realities in the event of a disaster or emergency situation.

Feeding America’s Government Relations Team can provide technical assistance to food banks who would like to request a waiver from their state agency or FNS, and support advocating with FNS for the broadest possible flexibility to these and other programs including TEFAP and CSFP.

As of 3/12/20, the USDA has waived the congregate meal requirement for schools and SFSP providers in 13 states. We are not aware of any other child nutrition program waivers having been approved by USDA.

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has updated program information in consideration of COVID-19: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster/pandemic>

For more information about the USDA's response to the coronavirus, please visit: [www.usda.gov/coronavirus](http://www.usda.gov/coronavirus).

- NOTE: For additional information on the status of operational flexibilities with federal nutrition programs, the Government Relations Team created the following document: [Federal Nutrition Program Covid-19 Flexibilities](#).

## 10. DISTRIBUTION METHODS

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### *How are member food banks planning to adjust their distributions?*

*Updated 03.13.2020*

Food Bank members are planning to make the following adjustments to limit contact during distributions in the event local officials urge vulnerable populations to avoid large gatherings.

**Suggested alternative distribution methods for ship to agency and ship to client are listed below:**

*Please understand that these are suggestions only on alternative distribution methods. Each member would be responsible for setting up their method that is applicable to the individual member. Please contact FANO if assistance is required.*

- **Last Mile Distribution**- Ship directly from FB to personal recipient.
  - Parcel Delivery
  - Individual P/D
- FANO has established a national account with the following shippers. Please mention that you are part of the Feeding America network when reaching out to the providers listed below.

Parcel			
UPS worldship	Customer Service	<a href="tel:1-888-742-5877">1-888-742-5877</a>	<a href="https://www.ups.com/us/en/services/shipping/worldship.page?">https://www.ups.com/us/en/services/shipping/worldship.page?</a>
FedEX Priority	Customer Service	<a href="tel:1.800.463.3339">1.800.463.3339</a>	<a href="https://www.fedex.com/en-us/shipping.html">https://www.fedex.com/en-us/shipping.html</a>

- The **Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma** is currently running UPS WorldShip with success. Jackie Martin has offered to field questions from the network regarding UPS WorldShip specifically. [jmartin@regionalfoodbank.org](mailto:jmartin@regionalfoodbank.org)

- Currently, we are also working on other potential options for last mile service with INSACART and UBER. If you would like to request these services or become a pilot program for this, please reach out to FANO. [rpaznorman@feedingamerica.org](mailto:rpaznorman@feedingamerica.org)  
[jreasoner@feedingamerica.org](mailto:jreasoner@feedingamerica.org)
- **Middle Mile Distribution**- Ship from FB directly to Partner agency
  - LTL Delivery (FedEx Freight)
  - 3PL Delivery (Choptank, Freight Quote, Total Quality Logistics, Uber Freight)
- FANO has established a national account with the following shippers. Please mention that you are part of the Feeding America network when reaching out to the providers listed below.

<b>LTL</b>			
FedEx Freight	Customer Service	<a href="tel:1.800.463.3339">1.800.463.3339</a>	<a href="https://www.fedex.com/en-us/shipping/freight-services.html">https://www.fedex.com/en-us/shipping/freight-services.html</a>
<b>3PL</b>			
Choptank Transport, Inc.	Nicole Reeder	800-568-2240 x5282	<a href="mailto:Nicole.Reeder@choptanktransport.com">Nicole.Reeder@choptanktransport.com</a>
Freightquote.com	Misty Rivera	816-949-6064	<a href="mailto:Misty.Rivera@freightquote.com">Misty.Rivera@freightquote.com</a>
Total Quality Logistics	Chris Borruso	513-831-2600 x51240	<a href="mailto:CBorruso@ttl.com">CBorruso@ttl.com</a>
Uber Freight	Travis Nelson	262-227-3389	<a href="mailto:tnelson@uber.com">tnelson@uber.com</a>

#### ➤ **ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS:**

- Host “drive-through” mobile pantries where residents drive a vehicle through a distribution line. Consult local law enforcement to ensure that proper traffic control is available.
- Schedule appointments to limit the number of people congregating at a pantry site at one time. This may require cell phone or email information. The following free online tools are not customized for our operations – however, they may prove helpful.
  - [www.calendly.com](http://www.calendly.com) – Free scheduling site.
  - <https://www.remind.com/> - Free txt or email system for teachers. Set up a “classroom” per time slot or per distribution. Some food banks have used this app to text residents about mobile pantry/grocery store stops.
- Some members plan to use group texts to send updates to residents and agencies. Options include:
  - <https://www.remind.com/>
  - <https://www.grouptexting.com/pricing>

*What about changes to congregate feeding programs?*

*Updated 3/10/20*

At congregate feeding programs establish hand washing / hand sanitizer stations and provide boxes of tissues.

- Be vigilant about sanitizing/handwashing and ensuring volunteers/staff with symptoms stay home.
- Temporary handwashing stations can be set up per the local health department recommendations (temporary food festival set up). Contact your local health department for guidance.
- Disposable facemasks should be kept on-site and used only if someone (worker or attendee) becomes sick at the site. Those who become sick should be immediately isolated from staff and participants who are not sick and given a clean disposable facemask to wear.
- Increase the intensity and frequency of your cleaning schedule and use disinfectants on surfaces including door handles, railings, and counters. **We have learned that some cleaning solutions are not effective against pathogens associated with COVID-19. They have swap to Bleach and Water in the warehouse and production spaces.** Check to make sure leaning supplies will kill COVID-19.
- Reinforce social and physical distancing. Encourage participants to remain six feet apart if possible.
- Develop signage for clients and volunteers about proper hygiene and actions to take when coughing / sneezing.
- Consider "to go boxes" / meals-to-go with disposable service-ware if possible.
- If your congregate site program is receiving federal reimbursement through the Child and Adult Care Food Program, consider requesting a waiver allowing your site to be exempt from congregate meal requirements yet still eligible for federal reimbursement, so that you can use other grab and go meal distribution options. Seek assistance from FANO's Government Relations Team for CACFP waivers.

### *What is our role in the event of school closures?*

*Updated 3/8/20*

With schools in impacted areas closing, food banks should coordinate with school systems to ensure meals are provided to children outside of school hours. This will likely be led by the school systems, but in other disasters when schools have been closed food banks have provided lunches through the Summer Food Service Program's "seamless summer" option, which allows for providing school lunch in non-school settings when there are sudden school closures.

### *What about "no contact" doorstep deliveries of non-perishables to quarantined households?*

*Updated 3/8/20*

Supporting distributions through a government agency is preferable. However, some food banks may be called upon to consider “no contact” deliveries to quarantined individual households.

Due to food safety concerns, delivery of only non-perishable items are recommended.

If considering doorstep “no contact” deliveries, discuss the questions/concerns below with internal teams and local officials.

- Will health officials provide additional training, screening, and make a determination if protective equipment is necessary for delivery personnel?
- Determine if any safety protocols will be needed for delivery personnel returning to the facility.
- What is the position of the Food Bank’s insurance carrier?
- Decide on optimal approach for deliveries –are fewer and larger deliveries that meet the household’s needs and reduce exposure feasible?
- Attempt to identify all the products needed (including nonfood items).
- Determine what size vehicle and other equipment (dollies) may be needed.
- To reduce deliveries, understand household size, dietary restrictions, etc. Determine if it is critical to customize the products in the delivery. If so, how will that exchange be handled (calls, video chat, email)?

## 11. AGENCY NETWORK

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*How are food bank members supporting their agency networks?*

*Updated 03.13.2020*

Food Bank members are providing the following information to agency partners:

- Information about the virus and how it spreads.
- [Signage to post in their facility](#)
  - Additional flyers and signage are available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)
- Personal hygiene practices.
  - Flyers with CDC hygiene recommendations are available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)
- Intensify cleaning practices and use Bleach and Water as it effective against pathogens associated with the virus.
- Recommending an additional distribution to households as a precautionary measure in advance of a possible quarantine or outbreak.
- Recommending plans for limited contact distributions in the event local officials urge vulnerable residents to avoid large gatherings.

Food Bank members are polling their agency networks to determine the following:

- Disaster contacts
- Current status
- Who plans to operate/respond in the event of an outbreak?
- Who currently performs doorstep deliveries? Are they planning to shift to “no contact” doorstep deliveries?

➤ **AGENCY/PROGRAM & PDO/RDO REQUIRED SITE VISITS:**

Given the COVID-19 response that is unique in every community in the Network, it may be necessary to postpone planned agency, program, and PDO/RDO site visits. You know your communities best. Proceed or reschedule in a manner that works for you, your team, and the realities of the situation in your community. If you choose to postpone visits, please remember to find alternative means of staying in communication with your community partners so they continue to receive your support and guidance as necessary. Your Member Engagement Director will work with each food bank during their next site visit to assist any members that may have fallen behind Member Contract requirements.

*How are agency partners adapting their distributions practices?*

*Updated 03.11.2020*

- For social distancing, we are asking agencies and mobile pantry sites to have only 1 representative from each household line up for food to decrease the number of people and interactions in line. Other family members should wait in their cars or outside in the parking lots away from others.
- Informational flyers for people seeking assistance as well as agency communication are available.

*Are there communication templates we can provide to agency partners to share with staff and volunteers?*

*Updated 03.08.2020*

We wish to thank Lakeview Pantry for sharing the following example:

*“Dear Volunteers,*

*There have been questions about what we're doing to protect against Coronavirus. As an agency, we are monitoring guidance and taking our lead from the \_\_\_\_\_Public Health Department and the CDC. The immediate risk remains \_\_\_\_\_ both in the US and \_\_\_\_\_ and yet it is important to stay informed as these types of situations can be dynamic.*

*Detailed information is included below:*

Continue to treat everyone who visits \_\_\_\_\_Pantry with respect and dignity. Coronavirus does not target specific populations, socioeconomic status, ethnicities or racial backgrounds.

The Coronavirus is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person, usually via droplets ejected during a cough or sneeze.

\_\_\_\_\_ Public Health Department categorizes the health risk to the general public as \_\_\_\_\_ and **is or is not** recommending any change in behavior.

There are a few things we can do to prevent the spread of any disease:

- Practice good hand hygiene. The best method for preventing contamination is hand-washing with soap for 20 seconds rinsing with hot water. Hand sanitizer stations should NOT be used in lieu of hand-washing. If you do not have access to soap and water, alcohol-based hand sanitizers that contain 60%-95% alcohol can be used as an alternative, but soap and water is the first choice. It is especially important to clean hands after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.
- You may choose to use the gloves we provide when handling food or serving clients. If you use gloves, please discard them after your shift. Do not save them.
- Avoid touching your nose, eyes, and mouth.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or issue so your mouth and nose are covered. Then go wash your hands.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Greet others with a wave and avoid shaking hands.
- We already wipe down and clean public spaces after each distribution. We are going to add a few new tasks to the post-distribution cleaning procedures including wiping down frequently touched items like doorknobs, handrails, toilet handles, elevator buttons and rails, etc.
- Know the facts, don't panic, and don't spread rumors.

Things that are not helpful or effective:

- Wearing a mask if you are not sick.
- Associating Coronavirus with or avoiding a specific population or nationality. It is not accurate and stigmatizing.

A few small actions can help us all stay healthy now and in the future. If you want more information, here are the resources:

*Thank you for your continued commitment to serving our community with dignity and respect. We'll continue to monitor and adjust strategies to keep us all safe and healthy moving forward.*

*Sincerely*

We also encourage agencies to post [additional signage emphasizing personal hygiene standards](#).

## 12. VOLUNTEERS

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### *What steps can we take to protect volunteers and food safety protocols?*

*Updated 03.08.2020*

Issue the same personal hygiene guidelines for volunteers as for employees.

Require volunteers to wash hands upon entering the facility. Lead volunteers to handwashing facilities/stations before beginning a shift. Temporary handwashing stations can be set up per the local health department recommendations (temporary food festival set up). Contact your local health department for guidance.

Disposable facemasks should be kept on-site and used only if someone (worker or attendee) becomes sick at the site. Those who become sick should be immediately isolated from staff and participants who are not sick and given a clean disposable facemask to wear.

### *How do we plan for reduced volunteer support?*

*Updated 3/8/20*

To plan for a possible reduction in volunteer support, food bank members are ramping up food box production in advance in order to have a ready supply to draw upon later. Some members are undergoing exercises to prioritize which programs they will continue to support and which they will suspend due to reduced volunteer capacity.

### *What would trigger closing our facility to volunteers?*

*Updated 3/8/20*

Food Lifeline in Seattle may serve as an example. After Seattle and King County Public Health officials encouraged businesses to allow employees to work remotely and issued guidelines for vulnerable populations to avoid crowds, Food Lifeline closed its facility to general volunteers in early March. As of 3/7/20, it is still hosting a small crew of production volunteers.

## 13. EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

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### *How are members and partner agencies applying an Equity, Diversity & Inclusion lens to COVID-19 Preparations?*

*Updated 03.12.2020*

As we continue to serve our communities with dignity and respect, we need to be especially aware that certain populations may be facing additional stigma or bias--based on lack of information, public confusion, false assumptions or fear. It is especially important during this time that all clients are treated with care and feel welcome at food distributions, while complying with recommended safety practices. Please see the flyers under [AGENCY NETWORK & DISTRIBUTION METHODS](#) for additional resources for communicating with agency volunteers and clients.

Recent articles in *The New York Times* cover how the COVID-19 outbreak can [further impact low-income black and Latino communities](#), who disproportionately face serious medical challenges—even in the best of times.

#### ➤ **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

Lakeview Pantry in Chicago circulated this message to volunteers to ensure we treat all community members with dignity and respect.

*"Continue to treat everyone who visits \_\_\_\_\_ Pantry with respect and dignity. Coronavirus does not target specific populations, socioeconomic status, ethnicities or racial backgrounds.*

*The Coronavirus is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person, usually via droplets ejected during a cough or sneeze. Associating Coronavirus with or avoiding a specific population or nationality is stigmatizing and not accurate.*

*Thank you for your continued commitment to serving our community with dignity and respect."*

## 14. FUNDRAISING

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### *What fundraising strategies are members pursuing to garner support for our COVID-19 response?*

*Updated 03.11.2020*

During uncertain times, we do not want to be perceived as taking advantage of a distressing situation. Instead, some members are reaching out to supporters to share their COVID-19 preparedness strategy. A few members are also employing fundraising strategies to meet the anticipated need.

- For example, this week the [San Antonio Food Bank launched a \\$1.5 million campaign](#) to reach 300,000 low-income households in southwest Texas with a 14-day food supply and coronavirus preparedness kit.
- In Dayton, Ohio, the Foodbank is proactively requesting funding from a local healthcare organization to provide 14-day food supplies for seniors in 2.5 county area to meet what they foresee will be a growing need.

Depending upon the situation in your community, members may wish to develop a COVID-19 fundraising plan and elect to execute it should local developments escalate.

➤ **ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES:**

- Create a designated virtual food drive for your COVID-19 response.
- Consult your digital providers for updates to your direct marketing appeals.
- Proactively communicate your preparedness plans to your most dedicated supporters through gift officer outreach.
- Assess upcoming fundraising events to determine if postponement or a virtual fundraising strategy would be a better solution during this time.
- Consider above the fold website home page banners/headers, similar to what applies during weather-related disasters.
- Prepare a crisis fundraising plan that can be deployed should the situation intensify in your community. This includes draft direct marketing communications, draft press release, and a list of funding partners who you could quickly engage to support needs.

➤ **GUIDANCE PROVIDED BY RKD GROUP**

1. Start with an email that is a public-health announcement focusing on the steps you are recommending staff and volunteers take to be safe. If you anticipate curtailing volunteer shifts, then your messaging would be different.
2. Post announcement, deploy a digital campaign:
  - a. Email appeals:
    - i. The first appeal, after the announcement, would focus on the key steps that you are taking to keep staff and volunteers safe, as well as ensuring that key programs continue to function. The ask would center around the increased cost of maintaining a safe working environment and continuing to provide food and stocking shelves appropriately. This also could address operational needs to increase staff (temp workers, etc.) to make

up for any potential illness of existing staff, or need for additional support to stand in the gap of any need based operations.

- i. The second email would be a simpler follow-up appeal that has specific directions for people to donate funds or, depending on actual response/need, things like canned food.
- b. Website: A lightbox directing people to a 'ways you can help' page that is on your website. Ideally, you would have a specific page highlighting 3 distinct ways to give: funds, time, or food.
- c. Digital media: Recommend Facebook and other digital display ads if affordable. You can also add this to paid search to capture those that are searching for specific keywords (how to get help, for example).

## 15. ADVOCACY

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### *What advocacy opportunities will help us respond to COVID-19?*

*Updated 03.08.2020*

Feeding America's Government Relations Team is advocating with FNS for the broadest possible waivers and added flexibility to multiple federal nutrition programs including:

- Expand SFSP and CACFP in impacted areas and waive the SFSP requirement for congregate meals to limit contact and reduce the risk of infection.
- Expand eligibility for school meals to address families whose financial stability is impacted by school closures and potential loss of work.
- A blanket national waiver to expand income eligibility for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP).
- A waiver for TEFAP and CSFP eligibility documentation in order to host mobile food distributions with limited contact and prevent the potential spread of infection. Provide more than 1 month's supply of CSFP commodities in advance of quarantines.
- Additional SNAP benefits to address loss of work and school closures.

Food banks in impacted communities will need to ensure they are communicating all mass care feeding needs and waiver flexibility to the appropriate state agencies, who will communicate the requests to FNS. The GR Team can help support those requests as needed by individual food banks.

As of 3/7/20, the USDA has waived SFSP congregate meals in Washington state and California. No other waivers have been issued.

- <https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2020/03/06/usda-makes-it-easier-safer-feed-children-amid-washington-state>

- <https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2020/03/07/usda-makes-it-easier-safer-feed-children-california-amid>

All Food and Nutrition Service programs – including the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)](#); Special Nutrition Program for [Women, Infants, and Children \(WIC\)](#); and the [National School Lunch](#) and [Breakfast Programs](#) – have flexibilities and contingencies built-in to allow them to respond to on-the-ground realities in the event of a disaster or emergency situation. For more information about the coronavirus response across USDA, please visit: [www.usda.gov/coronavirus](http://www.usda.gov/coronavirus).