

Wisconsin Food Pantry Conference Call Notes, Friday, September 25, 2020

Thanks to Feeding Wisconsin and all folks distributing food to needy households in Wisconsin.

COVID-19 Update

- Wisconsin is currently experiencing the **peak of the Pandemic to date**. Every Wisconsin County currently rated as HIGH for experiencing COVID activity. Yesterday, there were 2,302 new reported cases in the state. 15.3% of people tested were positive for the virus. There are currently 523 hospitalized with COVID. Since the beginning of the outbreak, Wisconsin has had 108,324 known reported cases.
- Governor Tony Evers issued an **Executive Order** on Tuesday of this week, requiring everyone over the age of five to wear a mask in public indoor spaces. The Order expires on October 21, 2020; it is attached.
- The Centers for Disease Control has issued guidelines for operating a food pantry during a pandemic; it looks very similar to the guidance TEFAP has issued for Wisconsin operations. A copy of the guidelines is attached.

Food Update

- USDA has extended waivers in the **WIC and Nutrition program** (pregnant and nursing women and children up to age five) to allow eligible households to enroll via remote access; to receive benefit increases remotely; to provide more flexibility in the food package and to allow additional options for food pick-ups. This Waiver remains in place through the Pandemic.
- USDA has also extended the Summer Feeding Program for children through the end of Calendar Year 2020 (or when all allocated funds are spent, whichever comes first) so school-aged children who are not in school can continue to receive meals.
- **The Wisconsin Department of Health Services will be increasing the Wisconsin FoodShare** (SNAP) benefit to the maximum allotment based on household size. This means that some families may get additional benefits for October. More information can be found on the DHS website: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/forwardhealth-foodshare.htm>
- USDA has renewed The Farm to Family Food Box program for a third round of food distribution through October 31, 2020. Please reach out to the food bank that you work with for more information on distributor, food products, and where boxes will be distributed.

Questions/Discussion

- Donna from Wausau asked if the Wisconsin decision to provide the FoodShare maximum benefit during October applies to new enrollees in FoodShare as well as folks who are currently receiving the benefit. It does; it applies to anyone enrolled.
- Charles asked for a description of the difference between TEFAP and CFAP; TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) is an ongoing supply of USDA commodity foods provided to participating food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters. Applicants and participants are eligible if their incomes are at or below 300% of the federal poverty level. CFAP (Coronavirus Food Assistance Program, also known Farm to Family Food Boxes) is a temporary program that provides pre-packed boxes of produce, dairy, meat and fluid milk to households regardless of their income levels.

- Marty from Wautoma asked if the Trade Mitigation Purchase Program (TMP) -- which has been supplying a large volume of food to states and territories -- will continue. Though USDA has not definitively said no, there is no new information about the program renewing. The last loads of TMP foods will enter Wisconsin in December 2020 so pantries are expected to receive their last deliveries of shelf-stable and frozen TMP products with their February deliveries. The conclusion of TMP doesn't necessarily mean that food supplies will drop substantially; USDA has historically provided "Bonus" food (food donated to states for which we don't pay) and these foods are indistinguishable from TMP foods. So we may continue to receive a substantial supply of food from another USDA stream – but it is unclear at this point.

Next Call: Friday, October 9th, 2020 @ 10AM

Call 1 (267) 930-4000; participant code 904-416-028#

Thanks to Pantry Operators for joining the call, and to Feeding Wisconsin for hosting calls. All pantry operators are welcome to join on the second and fourth Fridays of the month.

Notes by K. Kocol; kitty.kocol@dhs.wisconsin.gov.

Questions welcome at dhstefap@dhs.wisconsin.gov