

## Wisconsin Food Pantry Conference Call Notes, August 28, 2020

### COVID-19 Update:

- On August 25, 2020, The Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty filed a lawsuit in Polk County, challenging Governor Evers' authority to declare a State of Emergency in the COVID-19 pandemic and put a mask order in place for the State of Wisconsin. The Governor's State of Emergency Expires September 30, 2020 unless the court determines otherwise.
- On August 26, 2020, the Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty filed a lawsuit in Dane County asking the court to invalidate the grades 3-12 school closure order from the Dane County Health Department.
- On August 27, 2020, there were 72,260 confirmed cases of COVID-19 since the outbreak began; 63,730 are reported to have recovered and 1,100 people have died. There were 768 new cases were reported on Thursday, August 27, 2020. A total of 7,412 people have active cases.

**DATCP issues Grants:** The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection has awarded \$5M in grants to food banks and food pantries for equipment, labor and costs associated with maintaining food flow to households during the COVID-19 pandemic. DATCP has awarded an additional \$10M to food banks for the purchase of Wisconsin food products for distribution to pantries throughout the state. To see the agencies and awards:

[https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/News\\_Media/FoodSecurityGrantRecipients.aspx](https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/News_Media/FoodSecurityGrantRecipients.aspx)

**The 2020 Census:** The period of time that every person in America has to self-respond to the US Census been reduced by been reduced by 30 days; the original deadline was October 31, 2020; it is now September 30, 2020. If census takers wish to interview pantry users to make sure they have been counted, please cooperate with them as much as possible, including asking households if they'd be willing to talk with census takers on your premises as long as 1) a household is willing to talk with them; and 2) their work does not slow food distribution at food pantries. Participants are protected by law. Title 13 of the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations states that whether information is gathered from citizens or non-citizens, information gathered by the Census "cannot be used against respondents by any government agency or court." People should feel safe responding to the 10 Census questions.

**Food Distribution in the fall and winter:** Next week, TEFAP will launch a brief survey of food pantries to find out how they are distributing food now, and what challenges winter food distribution will present if the pandemic still requires us to avoid contact with each other. Please answer the five questions on the survey and follow the instructions to return it to TEFAP and to your Emergency Feeding Organization. We will share the results with you and update instruction in weeks ahead. Under current conditions, it appears likely we will need to continue outdoor, no contact distribution beyond September 30, 2020.

**Feeding Wisconsin COVID-19 Pantry Client Food Insecurity Survey:** Feeding Wisconsin is working with a team of UW researchers to launch a point in time survey to better understand food insecurity and unique barriers Wisconsin households are facing during COVID-19. This bilingual (English/Spanish) survey will be conducted in October 2020 as the demand for food pantry services is expected to peak at this time. Flyers will be distributed to Feeding America pantry guests and food bank mobile pantry users; they will direct individuals to an on-line survey. Either food pantries will receive these flyers in pre-packaged food boxes or a Feeding Wisconsin food bank will mail them or deliver them with their food orders. The survey questions will give FW food banks a better understanding of the populations you are

serving; barriers facing households during the Pandemic; what resources households are accessing to address food insecurity; and perceptions of pantry experiences and services. The survey will also provide an understanding of how household situations may vary around the state and across different client groups.

**Food outlook:**

- TEFAP supplies remain robust; Wisconsin has placed orders for food that will be arriving to counties through February 2021, However, USDA has begun to escalate cancellation of a number of our food orders – more than usual. Supplies remain sufficient.
- USDA has announced the third round of Farm to Family food boxes, funded at \$1 Billion. May/June and July/August deliveries were \$1.2 billion and \$1.47 Billion respectively.
- DATCP has awarded \$5million each to Feeding Wisconsin and the Hunger Task Force to purchase Wisconsin-grown foods and distribute them to households in need.

**Discussion: Issues raised on the call**

**Q: When are the next USDA Farmers to Families Boxes coming?** As welcome as those boxes are, nobody communicates with TEFAP state administrators about the volume, content, landing dates or locations of these boxes. If you check with your partners who may have relationships with these distributors (such as Feeding Wisconsin member food banks and Hunger Task Force), they are more likely to have information.

**Q: Are there other funds available to support winter food distribution?** No. TEFAP awarded all funds for FFY 2020 (through September 30, 2020) and is not likely to have additional funds to award in FFY 2021. However, a number of such requests were included in the DATCP grant requests, so some outlets may receive support for this if they requested it and if it was approved.

**Q: Can people share their TEFAP food with others?** No, the program requires each household to enroll in TEFAP. The eligibility form clearly states this.

**Q: What do we do if someone who works in our pantry tests positive for COVID-19?** With the disclaimer that we are not health experts, here is some guidance. First, you talk to the person who notifies you of their positive test and let them know you feel obligated to tell anyone who worked in proximity to that person that they may have been exposed. The positive person should isolate and seek treatment as instructed by their health care provider.

In anticipation that this could happen, some pantries are organizing their volunteers into an “A Team” and a “B Team” so that they operate the Pantry with no personnel overlap in case someone does get sick. That way, in the event of a positive test, you have a second team that can continue to distribute food at your pantry.

Pantries are not generally required to be compliant with HIPPA (Health Insurance Personal Portability Act) which regulates how health care providers must maintain confidentiality. It has high standards for protecting privacy and people who violate it can be subject to extraordinary levels of fines. Even though your pantry is not regulated by HIPPA, do be careful and respectful with such information; let the COVID positive person know that you’d like to share this with folks with whom they may have had contact. If

they prefer you not use their name, then just let folks know that someone on the shift tested positive, without disclosing who it is.

Next Call: Friday, September 11, 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.

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