

COVID-19 Check-In Meeting Notes
Tuesday June 23, 2020

Participants: ~130 participants

Agenda

Governor's Office Update: JT Austin

WSDA – Director Derek Sandison

Food Lifeline – Linda Nageotte

Second Harvest – Jason Clark

Northwest Harvest – Thomas Reynolds

Questions, Feedback and Clarifications – YOUR Time

Friday, June 26th 9:00 am – Contractor Focus

Updates

- JT Austin – The Food Security Coordination Team was mobilized 3/16/20, now 100 days later;
 - State agencies are working together to maximize and monitor food & nutrition program benefits for low-income people in order to increase food access and reduce demand for food banks.
 - Monitored and contributing programs include:
 - SNAP
 - Pandemic SNAP
 - Child Nutrition Programs
 - Senior Nutrition Programs
 - WIC
 - Fruit & Vegetable Incentive Programs
 - Food Assistance Programs
 - Coordinate with the State Emergency Operations Center and Unified Command Group to evaluate and support National Guard deployment as well as other volunteers.
- Director Sandison –
 - Coordination and resourcing: developing funding; secured funding initially through the state supplemental budget, which went to the 3 NGOs (Food Lifeline, NW Harvest and Second Harvest) and the FA programs. Eventually were able to access some of the CARES Act resources. Anticipating a spike in demand at food banks & pantries in August.
 - One main challenge has been to source PPEs, having to compete for items. This is more stable now and we are able to get more supplies now.
 - Currently focused on filling the TEFAP gap in food orders. Trying to replace what we had anticipated receiving from USDA.
 - Working with NW Harvest to secure warehouse space to stockpile some shelf-stable foods.
- Linda Nagotte – Special thanks to Katie, Director Sandison, Kim Eads, JT and colleagues.
 - Challenges: significant wholesale market supply chain shortages continuing today. There are times we cannot find enough supply. Canned fruits & vegetables are difficult to source. The #10

cans will shift to other products. The pre-packed boxes take up too much space and would prefer to pack their own boxes; working toward shipping cased-out menu items vs. pre-packed boxes.

- Impacts: Volunteer recruitment continues to be a challenge, affecting operations.
- Seniors/high risk populations: need home delivery/proxy shoppers through phase 4
- Looking ahead: some agencies serving fewer, some the same, some many more clients. Expected to peak in December. Requesting input for workgroup determining the next phase of service. Weekly email to agency partners with service updates will continue.
 - Planned return of Agency Express
 - Re-launch of Order Up
 - Donation stream recovery planning
 - Continuation of CFAP Program
 - TEFAP, TMP, CARES Act TEFAP continue
 - Shop the Dock available on demand
- Jason Clark – Express gratitude for all who have been working hard during this hard time.
 - Watching the food supply trends: still experiencing shipping delays, limited variety of foods, increased costs, and cancellations.
 - The Grocery Rescue program continues to operate in 170+ stores in Eastern Washington, though overall volume is down 10% to 50% depending on the retailer.
 - The Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) contracts are finalized for the second round of contracts through the end of August. Second Harvest is coordinating or directly handling 17 truckloads of CFAP per week.
 - Second Harvest Warehouse Will-Call Pickups
 - Working very hard to implement the Emergency Food Boxes: many challenges with these, but working hard on solutions.
- Thomas Reynolds – Thank you to everyone for his or her hard work and this is a marathon, not a sprint.
 - Consultant Report: you can download it from their website – northwestharvest.org. It shows food demand and why.
 - Communities of color have been disproportionately affected.
 - Food Banks increase: 30-300% increase in demand since beginning of March.
 - After initial struggles: opportunities and inventories have now become more readily available.
 - Focusing on capturing the voices of disparate and vulnerable communities: Tribal communities, immigrant populations, disabilities, seniors, new to the emergency food system.
 - Executing 13-county strategy
 - Communications with partner programs: please reach out if you need more
- Katie Rains – As of today, the state has been investing in the Emergency Food Box strategy for two months. During that time, we've helped distribute roughly 500,000 food boxes across the state-not counting the CFAP boxes. Our current commitment and partnership leads us through 7/31/20. The Food Assistance Team and programs will be available into the foreseeable future. We'll need to

make choices early in July to support hunger relief into August and beyond. We'd love feedback on the emergency food boxes.

- Joyce Beech from Cusick Food Bank in Ponderay County: overwhelmed by how the food is coming in individual boxes. They have to unbox items. Can we go back to cased goods instead of boxes? The form it is arriving in is causing stress and problems.
- Emily from Clark County Food Bank: went well; NW Harvest were responsive and quantity was astounding. Sites are overwhelmed, so they like the pre-packed boxes. Challenges; foods similar to USDA food. Anything pre-boxed takes away the ability to choose items. What we'd like to see next; remove the duplicated USDA type foods. Able to take bulk products and would appreciate larger shipments of product. Overall, it has been positive.
- Brittany from Chelan-Douglas Community Action: they've really appreciated the boxes. With the extra inventory, they've been able to add to the boxes averaging 30lbs per box. Clientele has been extraordinarily high. The emergency boxes are an easy way to keep people moving through and fed. No negative input other than running out on a few occasions.
- Kayla from Live Lifelong: appreciate the removal of #10 cans. Hope to figure out a way to continue to remove added sugar and look at the sodium content in the boxes. Need for nutritious options needs especially for those who have health issues.
- Mike from Bellingham FB: looking beyond 7/31, shortfalls of TEFAP foods will make more challenges. All 3 NGOs should be able to continue their work past 7/31.
- Katie: in contract with NGOs through the end of July. We anticipate some version of ongoing support. We were all impacted in early March with the "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" initiative came through which required great adaptations; so thank you for that. Moving forward, we anticipate needing to be flexible supporting the NGOs and everyone. What is available at the county level varies greatly from county to county. Please reach out with any questions. Closing comments from NGOs and Director Sandison.
 - Thomas: heading into more demand. Feedback is very important and hope we can do this type of call again.
 - Jason: appreciate the feedback. Will follow up with local folks.
 - Linda: echoing the thanks for the input and appreciate the feedback.
 - Director Sandison: thank you to everyone on the call. Keep those great efforts up and running.
 - JT Austin: appreciate being a part of this effort. Thank you to Thomas for showing empathy and compassion about the unjust treatment in certain communities. Thank to everyone for all of your work, I am inspired.

Q&A, Comments

- Claire Lane (to Everyone): 9:38 AM: This NYT article from yesterday shows clearly how unemployment insurance, stimulus money and other resources have mitigated the impact of COVID on poverty rates -- but also creates a huge divide, especially for households with

immigrants, and people not qualified for COVID relief. It also clearly highlights food insecurity & fear of eviction/homelessness in Washington State:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/21/us/politics/coronavirus-poverty.html>

- Jeff Steele (to Everyone): 9:39 AM: Darigold has fresh milk inventory available for NWH, FLL, and 2nd Harvest. Contact Randy Eronymous at Darigold. randy.eronymous@darigold.com
- Michelle (to Everyone): 9:49 AM: Thanks to NWH for the partnership. We continue to need more boxes. We support 70 food pantries in the county and we have never been able to get ahead of the need. We are continuing to advocate to increase the amount of boxes.
- Ken Trainor (to Everyone): 9:53 AM: Could we have homeless boxes?
- Michelle (to Everyone): 9:54 AM: I would agree this program needs to continue beyond July. There is an incredible lack of shelf stable product.
- Ken Trainor (to Everyone): 9:54 AM: Every week we are supplying food to 50 to 100 homeless households and there is so much in the emergency food boxes that they are unable to utilize.
- Andy (to Everyone): 9:55 AM: We've been taking the #10 cans out of the boxes are there any Seattle based agencies that want some of them?
- Linda Nageotte (to Everyone): 9:55 AM: Super helpful to hear this feedback, Mike and others. Is it preferable to receive the food as pre-packed boxes or as cased-out product?
- Jen Muzia, Ballard Food Bank (to Everyone): 9:55 AM: Ugh sorry, hit enter. can we move away from boxes and go to bulk so that we can adjust our menus easier. The pre-packed boxes takes to much capacity and while the content has improved it's not enough. The more we can move back to how we operated pre-covid that would be helpful. It is good to hear FLL is looking at how to get back to that.
- Britany Meiklen (to Everyone): 9:55 AM: I really wanted to say Thank You to all of the work NW Harvest, 2nd Harvest, and Food Lifeline. Like I mentioned, we have had a significant jump in clientele and you all have really helped us in Chelan and Douglas counties, fill the additional need.
- David M - Lifelong (to Everyone): 9:55 AM: do the 3 distributors have an idea of the percentages of food banks in favor of bulk palletted deliveries vs pre-packed ER boxes?
- Ken Trainor (to Everyone): 9:55 AM: Continue beyond July if possible
- Brent Hunter (to Everyone): 9:56 AM: Any talk of ending emergency food boxes is premature. The potential for lockdowns again is increasing and will affect how feeding programs are serving.
- Thomas Reynolds (to Everyone): 9:56 AM: Hi @KenTrainor - I saw your note and sent a message to my team to see what is possible and when. The main challenge is the ability to

procure the ready to eat supplies needed at the scale to build an entire menu.

- Connie Spitz (to Everyone): 9:56 AM: Hi Ken, we NWH will continue to talk about your concerns this afternoon -I can email you too
- Shawna Mahon - ICS (to Everyone): 9:56 AM: If we have other comments/feedback, what is a good address to send it?
- Katie Rains (WSDA) (to Everyone): 9:57 AM: Please send any follow-up comments to krains@agr.wa.gov, and also please do reach out to your county lead NGO directly to share your requests and concerns.
- Claire Lane (to Everyone): 9:57 AM: I want to know if food banks (at the state level and at local levels) are targeting communities of color, esp immigrant communities & Native American communities, where we know food insecurity is much higher than average. How are strategies being targeted to highest needs?
- josh martinez (to Everyone): 9:57 AM: Folks partnered with Food Lifeline for emergency response can email me, joshm@foodlifeline.org or attend our Thursday call. I can send you the invite if you did not receive it.
- Thomas Reynolds (to Everyone): 9:58 AM: @David M - Lifelong - We don't have a survey done, but it would be good to have it. We've done some informal, but maybe an actual survey would be of use.
- Fran (to Everyone): 9:58 AM: Boxes have been difficult to carry for folks that do not have a car.
- Second Harvest (to Everyone): 9:59 AM: Please feel free to share feedback with me directly at jason.clark@2-harvest.org or connect with Emily at emily.kanally@2-harvest.org. Thanks for all you're doing!
- Thomas Reynolds (to Everyone): 9:59 AM: @Fran - yes I think that is true. What do you think might be a good solution?
- Fran (to Everyone): 10:01 AM: A mix of bulk and prepacked may be helpful. Parking is very difficult at our site and carrying bags with handles has been much easier for most. However, securing bags with handles has been another issue.