What’s New: Menu Edition

The Foodbank has been listening to our partner agencies and has made adjustments to the food menu to better meet your needs. The Foodbank’s goal is to be a one-stop-shop to create nourishing meals for food insecure individuals in our community.

1. Unit Price on the Menu
The Foodbank has begun including unit price for products. This allows our partner agencies to better compare prices and ensure the best use of available program dollars.

2. Amazing Values!
In addition to our free and donated items, we are also able to bring you low priced products due to our large purchasing volume. To make these items clearly visible, we have added an “Amazing Value” section to the top of the menu. We hope that you will check out these amazing values and leverage your program dollars to help more people in need.

You can see the most recent “Amazing Value” flyer attached to this newsletter or on the Agency Zone home page. The Amazing Value flyer will be updated monthly, but encourage you to check this section of the menu regularly for the full list of available products.

Network Engagement Volunteers

The Foodbank will be launching a Network Engagement Volunteer program in 2017. Network Engagement Volunteers will be recruited and trained by the Foodbank, and deployed to our partner agencies to assist with PantryTrak, SNAP Outreach, and any other special requests.

The Foodbank will host a volunteer open house on Wednesday, January 17, 2017, from 9 am – 12 pm at the Foodbank to begin recruiting volunteers, who will start at programs in March.

If your agency would be interested in requesting a volunteer to assist with PantryTrak or SNAP Outreach, please contact Krystal Levstek at klevstek@acrfb.org.
Community Harvest now a program of the Foodbank

This is the time of year when we reflect on the blessings in our lives and recognize how grateful we are to be surrounded by family and friends. Here at the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank, we feel tremendously thankful for you, and our ability to work together to improve the lives of the people in our community by providing them with nutritious meals.

We are excited to announce to you a new chapter in our ongoing mission, to serve children, families and seniors. Effective January 1, 2017, Community Harvest will merge and become a program of your Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank.

Community Harvest was one of the first non-profit groups in the country to establish an innovative food rescue program. In Stark County, Community Harvest collects excess prepared and perishable food and donates it to community groups that serve families struggling with hunger at no cost. This simple concept began with a goal of preventing food waste while helping the hungry has evolved into a collaboration of numerous resources and agencies dedicated to providing more than 80,000 meals a month for those in need in Stark County!

The Foodbank and Community Harvest share the same goal, so formally teaming up is a natural step. This is truly a special moment, and we’re proud to share it with you! While the Foodbank’s operations won’t change, we’re confident this merger will drive efficiencies while creating new energy and innovation centered on unique ways of solving hunger in our community.

We think daily about the one in four children in our community who live in households that experience hunger. By joining forces, our combined organization will expand our reaches and provide more food than ever before. Together, we will continue to provide high-quality, nutritious food to those in need.

For additional information about the merger, please visit akroncantonfoodbank.org/CommunityHarvest.

NEW DROP SITE PROGRAM IN WOOSTER

We understand that it is not always easy to travel to the Foodbank to pick up your food orders, so we thought we could bring them closer to you! Starting in January 2017, we are rolling out our new drop site program in Wooster. A drop site is a location away from the Foodbank where we will deliver orders and make them available to pick-up. Our Wooster drop site will be at the future home of the Wooster Hope Center at 807 South Spruce St, Wooster 44691 on the 2nd Tuesday of each month from 7am – 9am. We will accept orders on a first come, first serve basis.

To participate in this new delivery option, your order must be placed three business days before the delivery date. When placing your order online for the drop site, simply skip booking an appointment and begin your order like normal. Select the drop site date you would like and then select your pick-up time as 7:00 a.m. Then, place your order as normal. Be sure to include “Wooster Drop Site” in the Comments box after entering your name, phone number and email address before you submit the order. When ordering by phone, simply tell our Order Taker that it is for the “Wooster Drop Site” on your selected date.

We hope this new program will help all of us in our commitment to creating a thriving community free of hunger.

2017 Network Partner Packet

To streamline account paperwork and provide all relevant information to program contacts at the beginning of the year, in the first quarter of 2017, you will receive a Network Partner Packet.

Included in this packet will be the following:

- 2017 Partnership & Liability Agreement
- 2017 USDA & Ohio Commodities Agreement (if applicable)
- Network Partner Report (2016 account summary information)
- Network Partner Program Details
- New Network Partner signage for program
- Written Notice of Beneficiary Rights (USDA Clarification Document)
- FAQ for Religious Organizations (USDA Clarification Document)
- Agency Orientation and Training Schedule
- SNAP Outreach Materials

The required agreements will need to be signed and returned to the Foodbank by March 31, 2017 rather than being completed during the annual site visit. The site visit will instead focus more on building relationships with our program contacts and learning more about the operations of the organization.

If you have questions about the Network Partner Packet, contact your Team Apple or Team Bread staff member.

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Clarification from USDA on religious organizations

The USDA recently released a new memo providing clarification for allowable activities by religious organizations during programs distributing federally funded food. The language in the 2017 USDA & Ohio Commodities Agreement will reflect the new guidance from the USDA. However, the new direction from the USDA is effective immediately, and so religious organizations need to be aware of the requirements and take steps to be in compliance now.

In the Agency Zone of the Foodbank website under the “featured stories” section is an explanation and an FAQ explaining what religious organizations must do to be in compliance with the new rule. An email will be sent to all TEFAP eligible organizations in October and will include a link which must be completed acknowledging that the notice of the new regulations has been received and implemented at the agency.

A few of the changes are listed below:

- New signage to be hung at programs
- New referral system in the case of a client objecting service on religious or non-religious grounds
- Direction regarding timing and location of food distributions in relation to religious services
- Updated language to be used when announcing optional religious activities, such as prayer

Please visit the Agency Zone of the Foodbank website (akroncantonfoodbank.org/agency-zone) for the FAQ and to download the new signage. Also, watch your email for a link to acknowledge receipt of this information.

If you have questions about the new USDA directives, please contact the Network Partners and Programs Department at 330.535.6900.

CLEAN ROOM BRINGS MORE TO THE MENU

This fall, the Foodbank built a new clean room in our warehouse. A Clean Room is a separate, enclosed room that is dedicated for bulk repacking, designed to the highest standards of sanitation to prevent as many environmental contaminants as possible.

What does this mean for our partner agencies? The Foodbank has repacked nearly 40,000 pounds of bulk product that was made available to our partners! Repacking bulk product is less expensive than purchasing pre-packaged product. Not only does the clean room allow us to bring in more products for our partners, it also provides an additional hands-on opportunity for volunteers.

Thus far, the following items have been repacked in our new clean room:

- Baking Supplies
- Cereal
- Pasta
- Cookies
- Crackers

RECIPE CARDS AVAILABLE

Thanks to a generous grant from the Cardinal Health Foundation, recipe cards are now available! The Foodbank has created recipe cards for 14 different produce items typically available on our menu.

These cards include information about extending shelf life, health benefits, and simple recipes to encourage clients to incorporate more healthy food into their diets. If you would like recipe cards to distribution to your clients, please contact Jessica Robb at jrobb@acrfb.org to request copies. You may also download and print the cards from the “Resources for Clients” section of the Agency Zone.

TRANSPORT FOOD SAFELY

Food safety is important year round – but new challenges are present during the winter season. Agency vehicles must be able to transport food safely – and this includes a clean agency vehicle.

If your agency picks up using an open bed truck or trailer, remember to clear all snow and debris from the area before backing the vehicle into the dock. Also, your agency MUST tarp and strap down food being transported in such a vehicle. Covering food with plastic wrap or shrink wrap while at the Foodbank is not a substitute for a tarp.

UPCOMING TRAININGS

ADVOCACY ROUNDTABLE
Tuesday  Jan 31  9:00 - 11:00am

PANTRYTRAK TRAINING
Thursday Jan 5  1:00 - 3:00pm
Tuesday Jan 24  9:30 - 11:30am

NEW PARTNER ORIENTATION
Thursday Jan 12  9am - 4pm
Friday Feb 10  9am - 4pm

New Partner Orientation includes Civil Rights and Food Safety Training. Due to time limitations, please bring a bagged lunch since there will not be enough time to leave the Foodbank. Please note, lunch will not be provided. Refrigeration for your bagged lunch will be available.

Have you had a change to key staff or volunteers with your program? They are encouraged to attend the full New Partner Orientation. To RSVP, visit akroncantonfoodbank.org/agency/events, or contact Gary Green, Senior Manager, Partner Services, at 330.777.7575 or ggreen@acrfb.org.