Soup Kitchen & Food Pantry

Best Practices Guide

ENDING HUNGER LIFTS US ALL

HUNGERFREEAMERICA.ORG

HUNGER FREE NYC

A division of HUNGER FREE AMERICA
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This kit is dedicated to the approximately one million low-income New Yorkers forced to depend on charitable food to supplement their wages and safety net programs and the more than 1,000 programs—with dedicated staffs and volunteers—who work tirelessly on their behalf. If you are working with one of these programs, or are learning how to do so, your commitment, compassion, and desire to help hungry New Yorkers is an inspiration to us all. Thank you.

The Best Practices Guide is produced and distributed by Hunger Free New York City. Funding for the update of this guide was provided by the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust.

Our thanks to the emergency food programs that contributed experience and expertise to this project, the citywide organizations that support the emergency food network, and all the funders of Hunger Free New York City. Hunger Free New York City gratefully acknowledges the vital support it has received from the following foundations, corporations, and government programs.
Because wages are too low and the safety net is inadequate, about one million New Yorkers struggled against hunger. Supplementing safety net programs with private charities – even when they get government food and funding – is no simple task. When you decide to help feed hungry people, you take on heavy issues and responsibilities. On top of acquiring the resources and organizational support to meet the immediate needs in your community, you may also acquire the knowledge that charity is not the long-run solution to the hunger problem. It is our opinion that government policy reform is the only long-term solution to our country’s hunger program. And despite the need for broader political, economic, and societal reform, thousands of religious groups and nonprofits must help meet the immediate need, which they do through emergency food programs, abbreviated in this publication as ‘EFPs.’

An EFP is any program that provides food to a general, low-income population. EFPs include hot meal and pantry programs (commonly known as soup kitchens, food pantries, and brown bag programs). They are sometimes referred to as Community Food Programs, Feeding Agencies, Food Programs, Emergency Food Relief Organizations, and Social Service Agencies. For the sake of simplicity and consistency, we will use “Pantry” or “Kitchen” to refer to individual programs. We do not generally include programs that serve only senior citizens, residents of a particular shelter, or program in our definition of EFPs, although these programs provide vital services.

Given limited resources and the prevalence of so many EFPS in New York City, we generally discourage people from starting new ones, unless you are in a rare neighborhood that does not have existing programs. That is why the main purpose of our Best Practices Guide is to document this wealth of knowledge existing agencies have to take action and help some of New York’s most vulnerable.

We want to know what you think! Your feedback will help us improve and expand this work in the future. Please contact us at info@hungerfreeamerica.org.
Hunger in a City of Plenty

Over the last few decades, under-funded charities and social service organizations have increasingly stepped up to fill in gaps when government services are not enough. Nowhere is this trend exhibited more clearly than the increase in the number of EFPs. In the 1980s, there were roughly 35 EFPs in the five boroughs of New York City, whereas in 2018, there were more than 100.

According to annual surveys conducted by Hunger Free New York City, EFPs, consistently state that they are unable to obtain enough additional food and resources to feed the increasing numbers of low-income New Yorkers at their door. The inevitable conclusion being that those who are most in need of these services are turned away.

The survey, completed by 244 of NYC’s EFPs, found that agencies faced an increased demand of nine percent in 2016 and five percent in 2015. Only 60% of the agencies reported that they currently distribute enough food to meet demand.

New York City’s EFPs are serving more people who have worked hard and played by the rules but no longer earn enough money to feed their families. Of the surveys collected, 46 percent of respondents reported that they were not as equipped to meet demand due to SNAP cuts. Nineteen percent reported having to turn away significantly more people, reduce the amount of food distributed per person greatly, and/or significantly limit hours of operation.
The Solution to Hunger: Not Just Food, but Food and Economic Security

Over the past few years, EFPs, volunteers, and advocates alike have learned to think and work in terms of “food security.” According to the United States Department of Agriculture’s Economic Research Services defines food security as, “access by all members [of a household] at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.” Aid that results in food security can come from connecting people with places in the community where they can get jobs and job training, helping people apply for SNAP (food stamps), WIC, and referring them to other vital social services and benefit programs.

What does this mean for you? It means recognizing that the problem of hunger cannot be solved by simply feeding people. A free meal or bag of food may help for a day or two, but to really help food insecure people, you need to offer more than food. You need to address the problems that bring people to your door, but the root cause of this hunger is food insecurity and poverty.

Hunger Free New York City believes that the government has the lead responsibility to end hunger and should ensure a strong social safety net. But the government should work in partnership with—and provide more resources to—nonprofit groups, faith-based organizations, businesses, and individuals fighting hunger and poverty. The top five solutions to hunger that Hunger Free New York City advocates for are: (1) passing “living wage” laws, (2) focusing economic development strategies on increasing earnings for the lowest-wage workers, (3) providing more funding for EFPs, (4) increasing and simplifying access to government assistance programs such as SNAP, and (5) increasing the ability of people to count education and training towards workfare requirements.

This kit will not only give you ideas and resources for feeding people, but also ideas for increasing their food and economic security.

How Hunger Free NYC Can Help

Hunger Free New York City’s Benefits Access Program trains pantries and kitchens to connect their clients with key anti-hunger and anti-poverty programs, including: SNAP (food stamps); Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); Child and Family Health Plus; School Meals; After-School Snacks; Summer Meals; and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). As a consequence of the increased participation, low-income New Yorkers now receive $40 million per month—$488 million per year—more today in food stamps benefits than they did in January of 2002.

The Anti-Hunger and Opportunity Corps (AHOC) is a nationwide AmeriCorps VISTA program, funded mostly by the federal government and managed by Hunger Free America (HFA), that partners with some of the nation’s most effective and innovative anti-hunger nonprofit organizations which support HFA’s mission of enacting the policies and programs necessary to end domestic hunger and ensure that all Americans have sufficient access to nutritious food.” AHOC deploys community change agents to break down
barriers to access to the government safety net while also learning best practices from across the country. This happens in many ways, including new project implementation, capacity building, volunteer management, and community support.

Hunger Free America has launched a new, nationwide initiative to redefine the way people think and act about volunteering to fight hunger. The “Ending Hunger Through Citizen Service” initiative and Toolkit were designed to amplify the impact of individuals, nonprofits, civic organizations, youth groups, congregations, businesses and government agencies so they can strengthen the long-term impact of their volunteer service through activities such as:

- Building the capacities of food pantries and soup kitchens through skilled volunteers;
- Increasing participation in government nutrition assistance programs;
- Engaging students in increasing the use and improving the nutrition of school meals;
- Working with gardens, markets and community supported agriculture (CSA) to improve food security;
- Providing nutrition education;
- Addressing the root causes of hunger by involving citizens in public policy advocacy; and
- Engaging in structured customized service projects for our community partners.

Hunger Free America is committed to engaging formal partnerships with stakeholders from both private and public sectors that support strategic volunteerism to eliminate hunger both in New York and throughout the nation.
How Can I Best Meet the Needs in My Neighborhood?

Should I Start a New Program or Aid an Existing One?

Before you decide on starting a new program in your neighborhood, it is vital that you carefully assess the real need in your community and explore the best ways to meet that need. Carefully consider whether your neighborhood really needs a new EFP, or whether it would be more beneficial to strengthen an existing program.

The hard truth is that it’s NOT always feasible or wise to start a brand-new EFP, especially since the city already has over 1,100 such programs, many of which are struggling to keep their doors open.

Assessing Existing Community Resources

Before starting a new EFP, visit the existing programs in your neighborhood and talk to the staff and volunteers. Most neighborhoods in New York City have at least one food pantry or soup kitchen. To get a list of EFPs by in the zip codes near you, visit our website at www.hungerfreenyc.org maps or Guides to Free Food and Assistance on our website at http://www.hungerfreeamerica.org or call us at 212-825-0028. If you, or someone you know is outside of New York City, please contact the National Hunger Hotline at 1-866-3-HUNGRY.
When you find EFPs in your neighborhood, you might ask some of the following questions:

- What days and hours do they operate?
- Do they serve a particular group or type of people?
- Do they have enough food for their program?
- Where do they get their food, funds, and volunteers?
- What public transportation are they near?
- Are they physically accessible to people with disabilities?
- Do they think there is need for other EFP in the community?
- Do they have relationships with any other organizations in the community to help people with needs other than food?
- What successes and advice can they share with you?

You should then carefully consider and answer two questions:

- “Are the existing programs in my neighborhood currently meeting the community’s emergency food needs?”

- “If the existing programs in my neighborhood are NOT currently meeting the community’s emergency food needs, would it be most effective for me to devote my energies to improving the existing programs rather than starting a new one from scratch?”

If the answer to either of the above questions is “YES,” you probably should NOT be starting a new EFP. Instead, you should collaborate with existing agencies in your neighborhood.
Collaborating with Other Neighborhood Agencies
Starting your own, brand-new program is always difficult — and often may not be the best course of action to serve the hungry people you hope to serve. A great alternative is forming partnerships with an existing EFP to expand the breadth the quality of services offered.

Examples of such partnerships include:

- Helping an agency receive more food and money from an additional community group in exchange for expanding services to that group,
- Helping the agency advertise its services to other community members in need,
- Helping the agency obtain more food, money, and volunteers,
- Assisting the agency in helping their clients obtain the government benefits (such as SNAP, WIC, Earned Income Tax Credit, etc.) for which they are eligible,
- Helping the agency help its customers move “beyond the soup kitchen” to increased food and economic security by starting job training programs, nutrition education classes, assets development projects, or access to low cost fresh produce, among others.
- Starting a supplemental program that members of your community have identified as a need: a clothing closet, an English as a Second Language (ESL) course, etc.

Assessing Your Resources for Starting an Emergency Food Program
Before starting a new program, it is vital to answer honestly all of the following questions:

- Will the program manager and clients/customers have access to a clean, safe, accessible physical facility which can be used on a regular basis at a reasonable cost?
- Will both the leadership and regular members of your religious group or other sponsoring group give your program consistent, long-term support, even if the “going gets tough” and there are complaints about resource constraints?
- Even without help from any other entity, will you immediately have enough good food, or money to buy food, to provide a steady supply to the hungry people in your neighborhood? It is important to note that key sources of food in New York City— The Food Bank, City Harvest, and government agencies—do NOT provide food to new programs. You MUST have enough initial food to last three to six months depending on your program type.
- Will you be able to have enough staff and/or volunteers to run the program at set, regular times each week or month?
- Will you be able to raise enough money to meet your other operating expenses? If you get all your food donated for free, you still need to pay for the light bills and other basic expenses.

If the answer to any of these questions is “No,” you probably should NOT start a new EFP at this time. Instead, you should collaborate with existing agencies in your neighborhood.
Please use the *worksheet on the next page* as a planning tool for determining whether or not you have adequate resources to start a new program. Before starting a food program, think about your resources: people, space, time, talent, funding, and energy. Be as specific as possible.

If your resources don’t match your needs, go back to the planning table. Plan your program for a level of service that you can maintain even if some of your anticipated resources don’t materialize.

To identify sources for the additional resources that you will need, start with your parent organization. Houses of worship and nonprofits are filled with people who want to give, especially if they know their gifts will be well used.
# Worksheet 1: Assessing Your Resources for Starting an EFP

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<tr>
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<th>Resources we have now</th>
<th>Resources needed</th>
<th>Potential sources for needed resources</th>
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<td>Paid Staff (hours/week)</td>
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<td>Volunteers (hours/week)</td>
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<td>Facility space</td>
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<td>Food (per pound/case and week/month)</td>
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**Note:** If you are unable to access resources, you should collaborate with an existing agency!
If you have carefully considered all the reasons why it may be better to help an existing program rather than to start a new one, please understand that planning to start a new one is serious work. It takes time and energy, but proper planning also prevents many headaches. The planning needed to start an EFP is best done by a committee of people who report to the house of worship or nonprofit of which they are members. You should allow three to six months for the planning process, and include community participation.

Before starting a new program, spend some time thinking about and researching the following areas:

1. The needs of the population you wish to serve: What will most benefit people?
2. The existing resources in your community: What help is already out there?
3. The resources your parent organization can provide: What can we offer?
4. The EFP model (see next section) you will use: How will we ensure people are food secure?

Again, as explained in the previous chapter, you might decide that you will better serve low-income community residents by teaming up with an existing program rather than starting your own from scratch.

**Determining Who Your Clients/Customers Are**

Do you want to serve anyone in need, or a special group such as the elderly? It is important to talk to people in need of emergency food in your community to get a broader picture of their situation. You could host a focus group, administer a survey, or hold a town hall meeting to bring people together. Ask them the following questions:

- Do they have access to healthy food?
• If they have access, are they able to afford it? If no, why not? What are the underlying issues?
• When do they need food assistance? (For example, many people need food at the end of the month when food stamps run out.)
• What kind of nutritional needs do they have? (For example, people with health problems may require special foods; mothers may need infant formula.)
• When can they come for food? (For example, people who work may be free only at night or on weekends; mothers may only be free while their children are in school.)

As you get to know people’s needs, you may find that you need to investigate further. You can call your Community Board (visit http://www.nyc.gov/html/cau/html/cb/cb.shtml for more information) or other community groups to learn more about particular community’s needs. You may have to answer some tough questions. For example, is it better to focus on long-term solutions rather than a quick fix? As you learn more, you may find that your ideas about what you want to do change.

Which Emergency Food Program Model Makes the Most Sense for You?

Soup Kitchens serve hot meals on-site and are open at least once a week. Often these EFPS focus on serving a larger percentage of homeless people than food pantries, because people struggling to find a place to stay often lack the means to cook for themselves. This model is the most labor-intensive and time-consuming because it involves food preparation, serving, and cleaning. If you plan to rely only on volunteers, be cautious about this option. You will need cooking facilities (stove, refrigerator/freezer, and storage space), supplies, and equipment to prepare and serve the food safely.

Food Pantries distribute groceries, mostly to people and families who have the means to cook. They are generally open at least once a week and are usually easier to run than soup kitchens. You will need a facility with shelves to store food. Some programs pre-bagged food and use volunteers to pass it out. Other food pantries arrange the shelves like a grocery store, allowing guests to choose their own groceries.

Sandwich and Brown Bag Programs serve sandwiches or give out individually bagged meals, also at least once a week. They are less demanding to run because preparation and clean-up is easier and less equipment and supplies are needed. These programs can be “mobile,” enabling you to reach a particular group, such as homeless people congregating in city parks.

What Model is Right for Your Program and Community?

There are different ways that organizations include the provision of emergency food into their overall work with clients/customers. Multi-service or “wraparound” programs, for example, require more resources than organizations focused only on providing food, but they are able to meet—on-site—the other needs their clients/customers may have. This
A list of service models is not exhaustive, it only suggests the various ways in which EFPs can be set up.

- A program that provides **food and referrals to other services** serves food and also has a system in place to send (refer) its clients/customers to other services and resources.
- A program that provides **food and another on-site service**, serves food and also offers its clients/customers another specific, regular service, such as clothing or a GED program.
- A program that provides **food, referrals, and another on-site service** combines the above models, offering food, a second service, and referrals to additional services and resources that it does not offer on-site.
- A program that provides **food as one element of a multi-service program** offers a comprehensive set of on-site services that address the basic needs of people who come for food (housing, health care, job training, public benefits advocacy, etc.). These are also known as “wraparound” services.

Most public sources of funding for EFPs (e.g. TEFAP through United Way or EFAP through Food Bank for New York City) now require that a program either makes referrals and/or offers multiple services in-house.

**Characteristics of Successful Emergency Food Programs**

As the past two decades have shown, EFPs cannot end hunger alone. How can these volunteer-based programs cope with such a huge problem? Realistically, no one house of worship or nonprofit can hope to end hunger all by itself, but by working in a way that:

(1) Centers around the needs of the people you serve, (2) Builds on assets (strengths, resources) rather than deficits (weaknesses, needs), (3) Builds community partnerships, (4) Has a strong infrastructure that supports the program, and (5) Provides and/or gives referrals to services that go beyond feeding and works toward helping people attain self-sufficiency, your program can work toward permanent solutions. Below we’ll discuss each of these factors in turn:

**Successful EFPs focus on the needs of people who lack food.** Successful programs are designed with the needs of those who are hungry in mind. They are client-centered. This can mean many things. It can include arranging hours to accommodate more people, allowing people to choose what they eat or take home, and serving people with dignity and respect. Such work begins with talking—and listening—to the people you serve. A great way to gauge the needs of your clientele is with a Customer Advisory Board (CAB). A CAB is a group of 5 to 10 community representatives who use your EFP on a regular basis who meet to discuss important topics affecting your community and work with your agency to improve services. A CAB can work with the agency to develop a specific mission and operating policies to guide its activities.

**Successful EFPs focus on strengths, not weaknesses.** Looking at individuals and communities in terms of their as-sets and strengths (as opposed to their deficits or problems) enables EFPs to facilitate positive change. For instance, many food insecure people are currently working or have work experience.
Helping them find stable, well-compensated jobs may keep them from needing emergency food. Similarly, low-income neighborhoods have strong community organizations and active houses of worship. Your program can build on and access these community strengths.

**Successful EFPs build community partnerships.** Community partnerships can help in many ways. A legal organization may give free legal counseling, a local job training program may be willing to work with your guests, the local credit union or civic organization may provide financial support, or a local teacher may provide GED tutoring during the summer months.

**Successful EFPs have a strong infrastructure.** Like all social service agencies, EFPs need to have systems in place that allow them to function smoothly and interface well with other agencies, staff and volunteers, and funders. This includes having well-developed systems in place for accounting, budgeting, fundraising, and volunteer and staff management.

**Successful EFPs help move people “beyond the soup kitchen.”** Successful EFPs provide more than food – they provide services that increase the self-sufficiency of their customers/clients. This includes both providing social services that meet direct needs and referring people to other agencies. Successful EFPs are able to help their customers/clients access public benefits, including SNAP (food stamps), and then eventually to long term employment. The number one goal of an EFP should be to empower its clients to no longer need emergency services.
SECTION 4

Using Referrals and Partnering with Other Organizations

Using Referrals to Better Target Whom You Will Serve

Some EFPs decide to help only a particular group in need, such as families, seniors, people in a certain zip code, or people with HIV/AIDS (please note that you may not be able to limit your program if you receive food and/or funding from certain sources. See next section). Make sure you have a way to define your scope in a way that is fair, sensible, and courteous.

Make sure your limits reflect community needs and priorities. For example, if unemployment is high in your neighborhood, think twice before choosing to serve only working people.

Publicize who is served and how often. Nobody should waste their time waiting in line only to find out that they are not eligible for help. Post your rules where people can see them in terms that are easy to understand. Make sure everyone at your nonprofit or house of worship knows your basic eligibility rules so they do not misinform people.

Post the kinds of documentation you require. When you decide which groups you will serve, determine what—if any—proof of eligibility you will accept. Some forms of proof you may want are: identity, income, family size, and address. Some pantries will only serve people who have referrals from churches or social service agencies. See below for more about referrals.

Be consistent and courteous. Make sure your staff and volunteers follow the same rules.
Should You Require Your Clients/Customers to Have a Referral to Receive Your Services?

Food pantries supported by the New York City’s Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) are required to serve people referred to them by the Human Resources Administration’s Hunger Hotline (1-866-888-8777, for more information on EFAP, see Section 7, Finding Food for Your Program.). This is a hotline that hungry people anywhere in New York City’s five boroughs can call to find out where they can get food that day. The Hunger Hotline will provide a caller with the location of a soup kitchen or food pantry close by. The Hunger Hotline assumes that if an organization registers with the hotline, it will have food available. In order to register with the hotline, agencies are required to be open once per week and have food. Callers do not need referrals to use the Hotline or the agencies to which they are referred, and can simply walk in.

To try to serve the people with the greatest need, many pantries require people seeking food to have written referrals. The idea is that another group will have done the job of establishing that the person really needs help.

Unfortunately, it does not always work this way, and the people in greatest need are often not clients of referring agencies. Sometimes it takes time to become a client.

**There are several ways of dealing with this issue:**

- You can eliminate the referral requirement, and trust that people who come to you for food are in great need,
- You can document people’s needs yourself, and/or
- You can choose to help only those that are referred to you (by an entity like the National Hunger Hotline).

Whatever your choice, it is a good idea to have a list on hand of other food programs in your neighborhood where you can send the people you cannot help. The list should include their hours of operation, groups they serve, and the kinds of documentation they require. If possible, have clients/customers call first to make sure food is available.

**Partnering with Other Programs to Expand Your Services**

Many of the people who come to your EFP will have multiple needs. You may wish to offer more assistance than food. In fact, some programs use their EFPS as a hub around which they have developed other services such as medical screening, housing and legal assistance, job training, GED and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. People come for the food, and stay to improve their lives in other ways.

**Some ways to expand your services include:**

Work with other EFPS to share information and coordinate your services. (You can get a list of emergency food programs in your zip code by contacting the Human Resources Administration’s Hunger Hotline 1-866-888-8777, clicking “Find Help” on the Food Bank For NYC’s webpage at foodbanknyc.org or through Hunger Free New York City at 212-825-0028 or www.hungerfreenyc.org. One idea is to convene a network of different
service agencies and EFPS in the same neighborhood in order to coordinate resources and avoid service duplication.

Research other social services in your community and develop new partnerships to strengthen services for your hungry neighbors. Resources that you can explore to learn more about local programs include:

- **Elected officials**
  - For State Senate, visit: [https://www.nysenate.gov/find-my-senator](https://www.nysenate.gov/find-my-senator)
  - For State Assembly, visit: [http://assembly.state.ny.us/mem/search](http://assembly.state.ny.us/mem/search)
  - For Federal representation, visit: [http://www.house.gov/representatives/find](http://www.house.gov/representatives/find) and [https://www.senate.gov/senators/contact/](https://www.senate.gov/senators/contact/)

- **Community boards** (look in the New York City blue pages of the phone book)

- **Hospitals** (Ask to speak with their social workers.)

- **Police Precincts** (Every precinct has a Community Relations Officer.)

- **Settlement Houses**

- **YMCA’s and other community-based nonprofits**

- **Social work departments in colleges or universities**

- **Churches, synagogues, mosques and other houses of worship**

- **Boys and Girls Clubs**

- **Block and neighborhood associations**

**Referral Resources**

What follows is a partial listing of referral sources available in New York City. The list that follows is intended as a resource for agencies, and may not be helpful for individuals and families who need services immediately.

**Coalition for the Homeless Reference Manual**


212-776-2000

The Coalition for the Homeless is the nation’s oldest advocacy and direct service organization helping homeless men, women, and children. They provide crisis intervention, a mobile food van, summer camp for homeless children, a rental assistance program, job readiness, and community voice mail. Their reference manual contains information and referrals on the following topics:

- Housing
- Legal Services
- Medical Services
- Public and Citywide Orgs
- Resources outside New York City
- Rights and Benefits
- Shelters and Homeless Services
Benefits Plus

http://benefitsplus.cssny.org/212-614-5578

Print Version: $125 (discount for 10 or more), 900 pages, 2 vols.

The latest edition of the Benefits Plus contains comprehensive information and screening tools on over 60 government benefit programs online including Public Assistance, Medicaid, Medicare, SNAP SSI, Social Security retirement and disability insurance programs, Family Health Plus, fair hearings, immigrants’ eligibility for benefits, public housing, Section 8, eviction procedures, child care, and more. Quarterly updates are free through calendar year of purchase, by subscription thereafter. Supplementary materials specific to certain benefit programs can be purchased on their website.

A 30 day trial is available by registering online for the Benefits Plus comprehensive screening tool. There are trainings available on a regular basis, some of which are available at no cost, and others ranging in cost from $50 to $75. The supplementary materials for specific benefit programs are $35 each.

Access NYC

http://www.nyc.gov/accessnyc

Access NYC is a free online resource provided by the City of New York. This screening tool enables community based organizations and individuals to determine a resident’s eligibility for 30 City, State, and Federal benefit programs. Applications for these benefits are available and can be submitted online through this website.

Other Community Sources of Food and Benefits

The following section contains resources for people who need food and other services. Your agency can help people obtain these resources.

Hunger Free America/New York City

www.hungerfreeamerica.org

212-825-0028

HFNYC’s Benefit Access program provides food stamps pre-screenings to individuals to let them know of their potential eligibility. People can call HFNYC for a pre-screening over the phone, and those potentially eligible will be offered various options for submitting an application. One of these options is to receive an appointment at a community- based agency where a HFNYC staff person can submit an online application thus eliminating the need for an initial trip to the City food stamps office.

To locate the Food Stamp Office closest to your agency, call the Human Resources Administration’s Hunger Hotline (1-866-888-8777), or call 311.

Contact Hunger Free New York City at 212-825-0028 or www.hungerfreenyc.org to order free, borough-specific materials that can be distributed to customers/clients. They provide information on how and where to apply for the SNAP/Food Stamps program.
Community Supported Agriculture

A Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm provides fresh produce to a group of subscribers who pay in advance to become members and then receive a share of the harvest. Typically, members receive their share once a week, sometimes coming to a farm to pick up their share; other farms deliver to a central point. A “share” is usually enough to feed a family of four meat-eaters, or two people on a vegetarian diet. Sometimes “half shares” are available. The price of a share for a season varies widely, depending on each farm’s costs of operation, total months of distribution, variety of crops available, and productivity of the soil. Many CSA farmers encourage members to get involved so that subscribers can work alongside the farmer to learn more about how he or she grows food. For farmers, a CSA offers a fair, steady source of income and a chance to talk directly with their customers. Most CSAs offer a diversity of vegetables, fruits, and herbs in season. Some provide a full array of farm produce including shares in flowers, eggs, meat, milk, honey, and baked goods. Some CSAs are dedicated to serving particular community needs, such as helping to enfranchise homeless persons. Some CSAs also donate produce that has not been picked up by members to local EFPs.

For more information about CSAs, including how to find and join one near you, contact Just Food, www.justfood.org, 212-645-9880 or go to www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/csa/.

Farmers’ Markets

The Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) is associated with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, popularly known as WIC. WIC provides supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education at no cost to low-income pregnant women, breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding post-partum women, and to infants and children up to five years of age, who are found to be at nutritional risk. The WIC FMNP was established by Congress in July 1992.

Women, infants, and children who are certified to receive WIC program benefits, or who are on a waiting list for WIC certification, are eligible to participate in the FMNP.

FMNP coupons are issued to eligible recipients, separately from their regular WIC food allotments. These coupons can be used to buy produce (fresh, unprepared fruits and vegetables) from farmers who have been authorized (directly or through their operation in an established farmers’ market) by the State to accept them.

Nutrition education is provided to FMNP recipients by the State agency, often through an arrangement with the local WIC agency, to encourage them to improve and expand their diets by adding fresh fruits and vegetables, and to advise them in preparing the foods that are bought with their FMNP coupons.

The Seniors Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) is a program established by the USDA’s Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC). Under the program, CCC makes grants to States and Indian tribal governments to provide coupons to low-income seniors that may be exchanged for eligible foods at farmers’ markets, roadside stands, and Community Supported Agriculture programs.
The USDA program was created as a pilot program in FY 2001; it was established by Congress as a permanent program in FY 2002 under the Farm Bill, and reauthorized through FY 2018 by the 2014 Farm Bill. Grant funds may be used to support both food and administrative costs: up to 10 percent of a State agency’s total SFMNP grant may be used as administrative funds. SFMNP participants’ Federal food benefit may not be less than $20 or more than $50 per year, per participant, with certain exceptions allowed. State agencies may supplement the per participant benefit level. Benefits are provided to eligible recipients to purchase fresh, nutritious, unprepared locally grown fruits, vegetables, and herbs.

School Meals, Summer Meals Programs

The National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program both provide nutritionally balanced low-cost or free meals to children in both public and nonprofit private schools and residential care institutions. The Summer Food Service Program ensures that children in lower-income areas can continue to receive nutritious meals during long school vacations, when they do not have access to lunch or breakfast at school. Schools, public agencies, and private nonprofit organizations that sponsor the program receive payments from the USDA for serving healthy meals and snacks to children at approved sites in low-income areas. All sponsors receive training before starting the program to learn how to plan, operate, and monitor a successful food service program.

After-School Care Snacks, Child and Adult Care Food Program

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) provides nutritious meals and snacks to children and adults, and plays a vital role in improving the quality and affordability of day care. Nutritious snacks for children in after-school care programs are available to public or private nonprofit community organizations through the CACFP. After-school care programs must provide educational or enrichment activities for school-age children in a structured, supervised environment.

In the CACFP program, public or private nonprofit centers, Head Start programs, family day care homes, and some for-profit centers and homeless shelters receive cash subsidies and donated commodity foods from the USDA for serving meals and snacks.

New York’s CACFP is administered by the New York State Department of Health. For more information, contact: New York State Department of Health Division of Nutrition, 150 Broadway, 6th Floor West, Albany, New York 12204-2719, 518-402-7400 or 1-800-942-3858. Contact them via email at cacfp@health.state.ny.us, or visit their web page at www.health.state.ny.us.

Nutrition Program For The Elderly (NPE)

The Nutrition Program for the Elderly (NPE) provides elderly persons with nutritious meals through Meals on Wheels programs or in congregate settings at senior centers. Each recipient can contribute as much as he or she wants toward the cost of the meal, but meals are free to those who cannot make any contribution. Under NPE, the USDA
provides cash reimbursements and/or commodity foods to organizations that provide meals. For more information contact: New York City Department of Aging, http://www.nyc.gov/html/dfta/home.html?reload or by calling 212-442-1000.

Gleaning

Food recovery and gleaning is the collection of wholesome food for distribution to the poor and hungry. It follows a basic humanitarian ethic that has been part of societies for centuries. We know that “gleaning,” or gathering after the harvest, goes back at least as far as biblical days. Today, the terms “gleaning” and “food recovery” are often used interchangeably and cover a variety of different methods of food collection. The four most common methods are:

- **Field Gleaning**: Field gleaning is the collection of crops from farmers’ fields that have already been mechanically harvested or on fields where it is not economically profitable to harvest. This term can also be used to describe the donation of agricultural products that have already been harvested and are being stored at a farm or packing house.

- **Perishable Produce Rescue or Salvage**: Perishable produce rescue or salvage is the collection of perishable produce from whole-sale and retail sources, including wholesale markets, supermarkets, and farmers’ markets.

- **Perishable and Prepared Food Rescue**: Perishable and prepared food rescue is the collection of prepared foods from the food service industry, including restaurants, hospitals, caterers, and cafeterias.

- **Nonperishable, Processed Food Collection**: Nonperishable, processed food collection is the collection of processed foods, usually with long shelf lives, from sources such as manufacturers, supermarkets, distributors, grocery stores, and food drives.

Before undertaking any large-scale, new food recovery and gleaning activities, it is important to assess current needs and existing resources in the community. It is critical to ensure that new efforts never duplicate already-existing efforts. That is why the first step in starting or expanding community efforts should be to identify partner organizations already involved in such activities or related activities. In New York City, you should contact City Harvest, www.cityharvest.org, 917-351-8700.

Collection and transportation of recovered food are usually the most expensive and logistically difficult aspects of food recovery and gleaning projects. It is critical to ensure food safety in all aspects of collecting food.

(Note: Much of the text for “Other Community Sources of Food” is adapted from the USDA’s website for Community Food Security, www.reeusda.gov/food_security/foodshp.htm and from its publication “Community Food Security Resource Kit.”)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit or of Program</th>
<th>What It Does</th>
<th>Eligibility Citizens</th>
<th>Eligibility of Undocumented Immigrants</th>
<th>Eligibility of Documented Immigrants</th>
<th>Where to Apply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SNAP</td>
<td>Food stamps provide cash assistance to buy food. Food stamps are no longer paper coupons – they are Electronic Benefit Transfer cards, which look and work like bank debit cards.</td>
<td>Eligible</td>
<td>Not Eligible. However, ineligible members of a household CAN receive benefits for eligible members, such as most children under 18.</td>
<td>Some adults and seniors are eligible; many children are eligible.</td>
<td>Call the Human Resources Administration’s Hunger Hotline 1-866-888-8777 or call 311 to find the Food Stamp office near you. Call HFNYC for pre-screenings and referrals 212-825-0028.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women, Infants, Children Program (WIC)</td>
<td>WIC provides vouchers to obtain certain nutritious, free foods for pregnant women, nursing mothers, infants, and children under five.</td>
<td>Pregnant women, nursing mothers, and children up to age five are eligible.</td>
<td>Eligible</td>
<td>Pregnant women, nursing mothers, and children up to age five are eligible.</td>
<td>Call the toll-free WIC Hotline at 1-800-522-5006 to find the nearest WIC Clinic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Meals</td>
<td>School Meals provides free meals for children, available at their schools.</td>
<td>Virtually all children from low-income families are eligible.</td>
<td>Eligible</td>
<td>Virtually all children from low-income families are eligible.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC)</td>
<td>EITC provides cash refunds to working people with children.</td>
<td>Eligible</td>
<td>Not eligible</td>
<td>Workers who paid US Federal income taxes, must have valid Social Security numbers that permit legal work in the US</td>
<td>File form with the US Internal Revenue Service. Call 311 for a list of sites to get free assistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soup Kitchens /Food Pantries</td>
<td>EFPs provide free prepared meals or distribute food for preparing at home.</td>
<td>Eligible at virtually all sites</td>
<td>Eligible at virtually all sites</td>
<td>Eligible at virtually all sites</td>
<td>For a referral to a program near you, call the toll-free HRA Hunger Hotline, 1-866-888-8777 or call the USDA Hunger Hotline at 1-866-3-HUNGRY or 1-877-8-HAMBRE (for Spanish)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Physical and Social Environment

The physical space in which you provide food, and the manner in which you provide it, affects people on a deep level. A dreary, unkempt space can be depressing, and long lines can sometimes make people feel uncomfortable and undignified. Some EFPs have created inspiring, inviting places for their guests.

Consider whether your food program can do any of the following:

Eliminate lines by extending hours of operation, or bring lines indoors to a cheerful waiting area with chairs. If lines are necessary, try to think of ways to “humanize” them: talk to people in line, give out useful information, play music that people enjoy, have nutrition demonstrations and SNAP outreach information, etc.

Refurbish your space with bright paint, posters, and curtains. (Mini-grants from the Citizens Committee for New York City could help with refurbishing costs. Call 212-989-0909 or go to www.citizensnyc.org for more information.) Hunger Free New York City can assist agencies with space renovations and maintenance by recruiting volunteer groups and/or organizing a service project for the organization during our annual MLK Day Serve-a-thon.

Decorate tables with flowers or pretty tablecloths.

If you are a faith-based program, hold community meals where guests and congregation members eat together.
If you run a soup kitchen, consider letting guests serve themselves and help plan menus. As an alternative, consider serving them restaurant-style.

Address your guests by name, and as respectfully as possible.

Ask your guests to volunteer in your program. If they do, treat them like any other volunteer — give them responsibility and hold them accountable. Try to give them stipends to cover their transportation costs. The work experience could also help them find a job.

If you feel the need for security, try asking your guests to enforce the rules. Try to foster a spirit of respect among everyone at your program, from guests to security guards. Building trust and rapport are of the utmost importance, you want to make sure that all of your clients feel welcomed and in a safe space.

Try “client choice,” where guests can choose the foods they want. Because there is less waste when people take only what they know they can use, client choice is a more economical way to run a food pantry. The food proportions for each client are usually determined by the size of the client’s family, which sets the number of items a client can get. Many public grantors prefer, and may even require, this type of pantry set up for clients.

It’s Your Environment, Too

Make sure you also take care of yourself and your staff/volunteers. This is an essential—but often overlooked—necessity for those who serve people struggling to get by. You will come into contact with people whose experiences and daily lives are much different, and maybe much more difficult, than your own. Some good ways to avoid burning yourself out are:

Work within your limits. Set realistic levels of work for yourself and your co-workers. It’s essential to serve people with respect and dignity — and you’ll be less likely to treat people this way if you and your staff are exhausted and overworked. Support your staff and volunteers and let them support you.

Network with other food programs to share experiences and information. You can locate them through the Human Resources Administration’s Hunger Hotline 1-866-888-8777, the Food Bank’s locator tool at www.foodbanknyc.org under “Find Help” or Hunger Free New York City at 212-825-0028, www.hungerfreeamerica.org.

New York City Department of Health Regulations and Permits

Soup kitchens and brown bag programs (but not pantries) are required to meet New York City Health Code regulations. Health Department inspectors may visit your program without warning and issue violations if you do not meet regulations. Food Pantries are not required to have a permit because food is not prepared on site.

There is no fee for the permit, but you must complete an application, show confirmation of your EIN number (Employee Identification Number), and provide proof of your not-for-profit status.
The Department of Health offers a four-hour food protection course free to all fraternal, charitable, and religious or
ganizations. If you would like to attend the food protection
course or have any questions about the Health Department Code Regulations, please
contact the Health Department’s Bureau of Inspections at 212-676-1600.

**Applying for Department of Health Permits:**
If you prepare and serve food to the public once per week or less, you just need to
register with the Department of Health. Religious, fraternal, and charitable organizations
that operate an emergency food program should submit applications and other
documentation online at [https://www1.nyc.gov/nycbusiness/description/food-service-
establishment-permit](https://www1.nyc.gov/nycbusiness/description/food-service-
establishment-permit).

**Before you fill out your permit application:**
The Office of Field Operations/Inspections (OFOI) provides application screening and is
available to answer all questions regarding those establishments that have not yet
qualified for a DOH permit. These sessions ensure that all applications are filled out
correctly and that a copy of your 501(c)3 letter is submitted.

You must provide your Employer Identification Number (EIN), which should be listed on
the corner of your 501(c)3 letter.

If it is not listed there, call the Internal Revenue Service Office of Exempt Organizations
at 877-829-5500, and they should be able to get it for you.

OFOI staff will submit your completed application and a copy of your 501(c)3 letter to
the Citywide Licensing Agency. You will not be charged a fee for this permit.

**When you receive your permit:**
Your DOH permit will be mailed to your organization at the mailing address designated
on your application. Make sure that you list the mailing address that you use to receive
the mail for your food program.

The permit must be kept and displayed at all times to the public on the premises
where you operate your facility. It must be shown to representatives of the
Department of Health when requested.

**Food Safety**

A critical consideration for all EFPs is maintaining the safety and quality of donated food
while it is stored. The following guidelines were prepared by the chef at the Child
Foundation of the American Culinary Federation, and can be found in the workbook
Understanding Prepared Foods. It should be helpful for agencies receiving donated
food.

**Food-borne Illness**
The most commonly reported food-borne illnesses are caused by bacteria, which are
also easiest to prevent with proper measures. Thousands of people contract some form
of food-borne illness each year. Symptoms may include an upset stomach, nausea,
diarrhea, fever, or cramps. Some people are more vulnerable than others to the effects of food-borne illness, particularly infants, the elderly, those with underlying health problems, and the malnourished.

The bacteria that cause food-borne illnesses don’t necessarily make foods look, taste, or smell unusual. Bacteria tend to grow very quickly under certain conditions: in temperatures between 40 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit (the “Danger Zone”), in high-protein foods, milk, dairy products, meat, fish, and poultry, and when moisture is present. Additionally, bacteria can easily spread through inadvertent cross-contamination, like when you touch other food after handling raw meat without first washing your hands.

“Receiving and storing your donated food can greatly help reduce the risk of food-borne illness.”

Preparing and Re-Processing Food

To avoid cross-contamination, remember to:

- Avoid touching your face or hair when working with foods.
- Avoid using the same knife, spoon, or tongs on different foods.
- Clean and sanitize cutting boards and counter space between tasks when working with different foods. Use an industrial cleaning product or a mixture of bleach and water.
- Avoid reuse of disposable containers. The aluminum pans food is delivered in should not be used again. Recycle them instead.
- Avoid storing washed and unwashed food together.
- Separate the raw and the cooked. Do not let juices from raw meat, poultry, or fish come in contact with other foods, surfaces, utensils, or serving plates.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before handling food or food utensils and after handling raw meat, poultry, or fish.

Receiving and Storing Donated Food

Receiving and storing your donated food can greatly help reduce the risk of food borne illness.

- Make space in the refrigerator or freezer for the donated food.
- Consider using the “FIFO” (First In, First Out) method; rotate the food to be sure the newest food is to the back or bottom.
- Clean all surfaces that you will be using before the food arrives.
- Evaluate the food:
  - Is the food discolored or moldy?
  - Does it have a sour odor?
  - Does food look as if it has been thawed and refrozen?
  - Has anything leaked onto the food from another container?
  - Is the food at the correct temperature?
  - When in doubt, throw out or compost the food.
Legal Issues: The Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act

When citizens volunteer their time and resources to help feed hungry people, they are rightfully concerned that they are putting themselves at legal risk. Fortunately, there is a uniform, national protection to citizens, businesses, and nonprofit organizations that act in good faith to donate, recover, and distribute excess food.

The Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act is designed to encourage the donation of food and grocery products to nonprofit organizations that provide emergency food.

The Act promotes food recovery and gleaning by limiting the liability of donors to instances of gross negligence or intentional misconduct. The Act further states that—absent gross negligence or intentional misconduct—volunteers, nonprofit organizations, and businesses shall not be subject to civil or criminal liability arising from the nature, age, packaging, or condition of apparently wholesome food or apparently fit grocery products received as donations.

Planning Nutritious Menus

Poor nutrition can lead to heart disease, diabetes, cancer, obesity, and other chronic illnesses. For some of the people you serve, your program could be a primary source for their daily food intake. It is important that the meal or pantry bag you provide is balanced and nutritious. Funders may require that certain nutritional standards are maintained either through setting standards for the food provided by the grants or by monitoring the food prepared by soup kitchens/brown bag programs. The USDA offers a simple, practical guide to help you plan menus that are consistent with healthy eating and living.

Visit www.usda.gov to view this year’s Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
For the first three to six months of operation of your new EFP, you must be able to get all the food and money you need to operate your program on your own. You cannot get food from the largest agencies that support EFPs (The Food Bank, City Harvest, United Way, and New York City’s Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP), all of which are detailed below) until you have established that you have a viable food program that has been able to operate for a minimum of three to six months. After receiving funds from those primary sources, you can then expand with a mix of other government and private support as well as continue to raise money and goods at a local level.

While each primary funding organization has different operational requirements, they are beginning to coordinate their rules, and the more important and common requirements are listed below. To qualify for support from the major organizations providing food, your program must:

- Have been in operation for at least three to six months before receiving support
- Operate year-round (or nearly) and have regular hours, serving people at least once a week
- Serve at least 100 meals per month
- Serve the general public
• Not require people to participate in worship or political activity to receive food
• Not charge money for food
• Be a tax-exempt, 501(c)3 nonprofit organization or an incorporated religious organization or be part of a 501(c)3 or religious organization that takes fiscal responsibility for your program.
• Keep records of people served and submit monthly statistical reports
• Keep records of your food supplies
• Meet municipal food safety requirements
• Allow agency monitors to visit your program

Finding Food and Money During the First Three to Six Months

The best way to get your program up and running during the first three to six months is by getting donations of food and money from within your community and beginning on a very small scale. The easiest way to do this is through food and money drives in your own neighborhood, especially through your own congregation or other organizations located in your neighborhood. This will be most successful if the local leadership supports the project, and people are asked regularly to give — whether weekly, monthly or quarterly.

Try to raise money rather than food — it will stretch a lot further if you shop at a place like the Harlem Super Food Grocery Story, the Brooklyn Terminal Market or the Bronx Hunts Point Co-Op. You will be able to buy the foods people need instead of having to offer them the unwanted cans from the backs of people’s cupboards.

Local fundraising campaigns are often seasonal, focusing on times during the year when individuals in your community are most inspired to give funds or food to a local charity. Such times of the year include: Martin Luther King Jr.’s Birthday, World Hunger Day (October 16), Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukah, Kwanzaa, and Eid al-Fitr. You can also center a fundraising campaign and food drive around a seasonal weather change, such as a big snow storm or as part of an anti-hunger initiative.

Careful planning is at the center of any fundraising campaign. Before you mobilize for fundraising or a food drive, you need to think ahead about what your program’s needs are and what your approach to seeking resources will be. You should:

Assess your resources.
This includes creating a budget, conducting an inventory of your food, supplies, and equipment, and noting what you receive “in-kind” (e.g. space, volunteer labor, and equipment).

Determine the amount of funds and other resources you need.
What is the gap between your projected budget and incoming funds? What kinds of food or equipment do you need? To avoid feeling overwhelmed or spreading your campaign too thin, focus on your one or two most critical needs.
Decide who will be directing and undertaking your fundraising and food drive efforts. Do you have paid staff who can do it, or are you relying on board members and volunteers?

Determine how much time, space, transportation, and other resources you can devote to your campaign. Remember: You want to maximize your returns and minimize your investment!

Choose fundraising methods that are most compatible to your particular situation. Should you be approaching a local business, asking for money from individuals, and/or hosting a special event? (See next page for tips.)

Draw up a list of who you will request funds and/or food from. Start with all your possible contacts. Every single person you know is a potential donor. Your “donor prospects” include: board members, family, friends, neighbors, members of your congregation or other organizations you belong to, professional contacts, etc.

Decide how you will promote your program and drive. Will you, for instance, write letters, publish an article in your newsletter, and/or call people? Have a mission statement and description of your goals that you can quickly adapt to any situation.

Plan how to thank and acknowledge your potential donors. This is a crucial step that should not be ignored. Businesses, for example, will be more willing to give if they know they will receive public acknowledgment. Letters, cards, and certificates all work well. You can also list donors in your newsletters and other publications.

Follow up with thank-yous and continued contact. If you are planning on using your fundraising campaign to develop an individual donor base, it is important that you record donors’ names and contact information. Thank your donors and maintain contact with them, letting them know how your program is doing. Donors that you maintain steady contact with and thank often will be more likely to give to your cause on a regular basis.

Evaluate your efforts and plan for your next campaign! Did you raise as much as you had hoped for? What can you do differently next time? What are the next steps you should be taking to improve your program?
Grassroots Methods for Raising Funds and Food

Here are some tried-and-true strategies for fundraising and food drives. You may not be able to try all of them, but choose the ones that are most appropriate to your community.

- Ask for money as well as (or instead of) food. You can do more with it.
- If you do ask for food, be specific: ask for the things people really need, like baby formula, canned meat, etc.
- Ask spiritual leaders, local politicians, and other leaders to mention your drive in their sermons, speeches, and other public forms of communication.
- Designate the funds from your congregation’s collection plate for your drive.
- Include a blurb, article, or letter about your drive in your organization’s newsletter or congregation’s bulletin.
- Collect donations outside of a local supermarket, either in person or by having a designated bin or box available.
- Staff a table with your employees and/or volunteers at a local fair or event.
- Write a letter asking for donations and send it to members of your organization, local congregation, and other groups and individuals.
- Organize a phone-a-thon staffed by volunteers and/or employees. Call your contacts.
- Go door-to-door and ask local businesses for contributions. (Local food vendors may give you unsold goods!)
- Local politicians and other leaders may be willing to “sponsor” your project with regular contributions of food or money.
- Ask members of a community garden to share their produce with your program.
- Ask vendors at a local farmers market to donate unsold goods and produce.
- Organize a fundraising event (it can be as simple as a bake sale or as elaborate as a sit-down dinner with entertainment).
- Establish a relationship with other congregations in your community and partner with them for fund raising and food drives.
- Ask other groups (such as Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, classes of school children, block associations, fraternal organizations, etc.) to join in on your drive.

Government Resources for Food

Through a partnership of government agencies and nonprofit organizations, FeedNYC (www.feednyc.org) is an electronic management system for registered emergency food programs to use for operational purposes. In order to qualify, an emergency food program must receive funding and/or food donations from at least one of the forthcoming sources mentioned. The website provides a concise matrix (found here: http://goo.gl/EpxD5A) for emergency food programs to evaluate their eligibility for these funding sources.

New York City

The Emergency Food Assistance Program, or EFAP, provides funding to more than 500 soup kitchens and food pantries citywide. It is administered by the Office of Food Programs and Policy Coordination in the Human Resources Administration (HRA).
While EFAP staff coordinate the distribution of non-perishable food commodities to the members as well as monitor the emergency feeding program members to ensure adherence to EFAP and agency guidelines, the food is actually delivered by The Food Bank.

To apply to EFAP, visit http://www1.nyc.gov/site/hra/help/emergency-food-assistance-program.page and/or http://www.feednyc.org to find all needed information, prerequisites, and applicable forms. Application are generally due in Mid-March for the following Fiscal Year. If you have any questions, you can contact Laura Peete, HRA Representative, at 929-221-7151.

These grants are given in the form of food allocations that equal the value of food that will be delivered by The Food Bank deliveries are scheduled once per month, which allows for even distribution of the allocation throughout the six-month cycle.

**New York State**

The Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program, or HPNAP, is administered by the New York State Department of Health and its two New York City contractors, the United Way of New York City and The Food Bank. They aim to help New Yorkers in need lead more healthy, productive and self-sufficient lives through three initiatives: increase access to safe and nutritious food, develop and provide nutrition and health education programs, and empower people to increase their independence from emergency food assistance programs.

For general inquiries or to receive a HPNAP application, contact:

United Way of New York City  
2 Park Avenue, 2nd Floor  
New York, NY 10016  
Phone: 212-251-2420  
Fax: 212-251-4128  
Or visit: [http://unitedwaynyc.org/pages/HPNAP](http://unitedwaynyc.org/pages/HPNAP)

Applications are mailed each year in late spring and must be returned within one month. Your organization must reapply each year. Workshops are available to help you understand the program and assist you with the application process.

United Way’s HPNAP program gives a program a “line of credit” for a certain amount of money to purchase foods through one vendor selected by United Way. United Way’s HPNAP also allows your program to apply for a limited amount of funds for operations support (staff, space, utilities, disposables, transportation, and capital equipment such as shelves or refrigerators). Funds from this program also allow EFPs to gain access to local produce during the growing season. Additionally, each year one proposal is selected, through application, to receive a seed grant to start an Urban Farming project.
Federal Funds

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds the Emergency Food & Shelter Program (EFSP), which is administered by the United Way of New York City. Awards start at $2,000 and are highly competitive. Awards are primarily for food, supplies (there is a $300 limit for each item), and there is a small amount of funding available for administrative costs. With the EFSP program, unlike EFAP or HPNAP, organizations get cash awards and can order food directly from the vendor of their choice. Emergency assistance for rent, mortgage, and utilities is also available.

For more information, please visit http://unitedwaynyc.org/pages/emergency-food-and-shelter-program. Organizations apply for EFSP directly through United Way online. Application dates and deadlines vary from year to year as this is a federal source of funding.

Private Resources for Food

The Food Bank of New York City
EFPs that have been operating three months or longer, and that have nonprofit 501(c)3 status (or have a fiscal conduit with such status), can apply to become members of The Food Bank, www.foodbanknyc.org. To join their network, EFPs are advised to visit the Food Bank’s website and to browse a list of membership criteria, under the “Join Our Network” tab on the website’s left-hand navigation bar. Upon reviewing the list and evaluating eligibility, interested parties should contact, Brandy Gray, Community Programs Associate at bgray@foodbanknyc.org for more information.

From our general knowledge, the review process may takes 6-8 weeks. If you are accepted, you are required to attend an orientation that is conducted on a monthly basis.

City Harvest
City Harvest is a nonprofit organization that picks up unused and leftover food from restaurants, cafeterias, bakeries, supermarkets, wholesalers, among others and delivers it to emergency food programs for free. It has provided over 116 million pounds of food to hungry New Yorkers since 1982, making it the world’s largest and oldest food rescue program. If you are interested in receiving food from City Harvest and becoming a member, contact:

City Harvest
575 8th Avenue, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10018
Agency Relations Hotline: 646.412.0740
www.cityharvest.com

How to Maximize Your Food Budget
Former Executive Director Doreen Wohl turned West Side Campaign Against Hunger (WSCAH) into the city’s largest food pantry, tripling the number of people it serves – on almost the same food budget. Here are some of her suggestions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Think “business” and “grocery store”:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Buy in Bulk:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You are running a business. You always have to know your income and expenses. You can’t make rational decisions if you don’t.</td>
<td>It pays off over time. In one instance, a two-cent decrease in milk costs, through bulk purchasing, saved WSCAH over $700 a year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Keep an inventory of your food – and keep it current:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Just say no:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Know when stock is low, what your customers prefer – and what items are unpopular.</td>
<td>If donated food is not useable, or clients don’t want it, turn it down.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Ordering online is much more efficient than phone ordering.</strong></th>
<th><strong>Beware of false economics:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Food Bank quickly runs out of popular items.</td>
<td>Cheapest isn’t always the best, especially if people reject low-quality food or items they dislike. Weigh all factors, not just price.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Seek free food first:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When ordering from The Food Bank, seek free TEFAP items first. Select donated food next. Order from the wholesale list last.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finding Money to Run Your Program

What You Need Before You Start Fundraising

Finding money was probably not the first thing you thought about when you started your program. You got into this business because you wanted to feed hungry people, not because you wanted to be a fundraiser. Even if the food you receive is free of cost (not always the case), you have to think about rent, utilities, supplies, and maybe paying for staff or volunteer stipends. In fact, you may have discovered that how much money you can raise becomes a limiting factor in what you can do with your program, and how fast your program can grow.

Before you begin your fundraising efforts, you need to have a few things in place, including an accounting system that tracks your income and expenses, and a budget that projects your sources of income and expenses.

Developing an Accounting System

While the world of accounting can seem intimidating to many, you can implement a system for your program that is jargon-free and easy to use and understand. If your agency has a computer, you may want to consider using a simple accounting program, such as QuickBooks for nonprofits (www.techsoup.org is a great resource for deeply discounted software if you need to buy this software). The advantage of computerizing
your bookkeeping is that you will have a much easier time generating budgets and reports for yourself and for funders.

Many programs do not have access to computers, but it is also quite easy to set up a manual bookkeeping system. It will be helpful for you to purchase a ledger notebook, but any notebook can be used as long as you keep clear, accurate records. Microsoft Excel is also a really good resource to use in tracking a simple budget. If you are interested in accounting resources, try researching tutorials through Google and/or YouTube. Hunger Free America may be able to assist you with finding a skills-based accounting volunteer to help build a basic system and/or keep track of pre-existing and future financial records. For more information on how to seek a skills-based volunteer, visit http://www.hungervolunteer.org.

The key to good accounting is to record all the money coming into and out of your program, providing as much detail as possible. That’s all there is to it! The details you should include are:

- Amount of transaction
- Date of transaction
- Purpose of transaction

Often, funders will want you to separately track your use of the funds they’ve given you, but this is not very difficult if you have set up a clear system. The following page contains a sample ledger sheet, which has HPNAP funds separated and categorized into different expense categories. This page functions as an example only. As you begin to receive funding from different organizations, you will need to know from each: (1) what areas of your program they will fund, and (2) how they would like expenses tracked.

### Table 2: Basic Bookkeeping – Checking Account

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Check #</th>
<th>Memo</th>
<th>Check Amt</th>
<th>Deposit</th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Jul</td>
<td></td>
<td>EFAP grant</td>
<td></td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Jul</td>
<td>666</td>
<td>TEFAP food</td>
<td>$225</td>
<td></td>
<td>$275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-Jul</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>HPNAP supplies</td>
<td>$75</td>
<td></td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-Jul</td>
<td></td>
<td>Anon. Donation</td>
<td></td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-Jul</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>Folding Table</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td></td>
<td>$250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3: Basic Bookkeeping – EFAP Account

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Check #</th>
<th>Check Amt</th>
<th>Deposit Amt</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Supplies</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Jul</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$325</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Jul</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>$75</td>
<td>$130</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Worksheet 2: Creating a Budget and Planning Your Funding Needs

In order to develop a coherent fundraising plan, it’s important to first know where your organization stands in terms of current funding and expenses. If you do not have a projected budget for your current fiscal year, you can use the worksheets on the following pages to help you get started.

### Step 1: Determine Your Source of Income

List all the revenue your organization will receive for your current fiscal year. Do not include any funds that you have requested but are not sure you will receive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Source of Support</th>
<th>Private Source of Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Food Support Program EFSP</td>
<td>Corporations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunger Prevention Nutrition Assistance Program HPNAP</td>
<td>Foundations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP)</td>
<td>Religious Institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)</td>
<td>Individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>In-Kind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Public</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total Private</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*Note: In-kind sources of support are any items you receive for free. This can include rent, utilities, volunteer time, food donations, etc. To calculate the value of an in-kind donation such as volunteer time, figure out how much you would have to pay for someone to do the work you are receiving for free.)*

### Step 2: List Your Expenses

List all the types and amounts of expenses your organization has had or will have for your current fiscal year. Make sure to include the cost of things that you receive as in-kind donations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>Other than Personnel (OTP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaries</td>
<td>Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fringes*</td>
<td>Supplies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Kind Labor</td>
<td>Rent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Utilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>Transportation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Postage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Insurance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total OTP</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*Note: Fringe expenses include the employer’s portion of an employee’s taxes, benefits, etc.)*
Are your expenses higher than your revenue? If so, you need to do some fundraising or modify your projected expenses for the year. Are you planning on expanding your services in the near future? How will you cover the costs associated with expansion? Once you have a better sense of how much revenue you still need to generate, you can begin to put together a fundraising plan.

If you have funding proposals for which you have heard no response or you plan to request funds from particular sources, you can use the following table to help assess where your organization is in its plan to raise more funds. You should always seek more funding than you will actually need, as you will probably not receive funds from every group you ask, and those who do give may give less than the requested amount.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount Requested</th>
<th>Amount to be Requested</th>
<th>Likely to Receive</th>
<th>Unlikely to Receive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RAD Foundation</td>
<td>$7500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRES Corporation</td>
<td></td>
<td>$2000</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You can use a similar plan to help meet your goal in fundraising with individuals. For example, suppose you want to raise $5,000. You need to figure out how many donations at different amounts you will try to receive. You also need to ask for donations from more people than will actually give to you. A good rule of thumb is to ask three to four times as many people as you hope to receive donations from at the higher end of what you’re asking for, and two to three times as many people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Donation Amount</th>
<th># of people you need that amount from</th>
<th># of people you need to ask</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$1000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4 (1x4)</td>
<td>$1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9 (3x3)</td>
<td>$1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$250</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18 (6x3)</td>
<td>$1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20 (10x2)</td>
<td>$1000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Calculating the Dollar Value of Volunteer Time

Most people volunteer because it makes them feel good and they like contributing to their communities. If a potential funder asked about the value of volunteers to your program, what would you say? Do you have a system to track the number of hours volunteers contribute? Have you assigned a monetary value to each job so your figures accurately reflect your program?

Compare these two statements regarding a program’s use of volunteers:

• We saved lots of money by using volunteers.
• Because of our strong volunteer support, we were able to extend our resources and open a Saturday food program.

While both statements may be true, the first implies that the organization had resources it did not need because their volunteers were free. The second response makes the point that volunteers extend the budget beyond anything the organization could otherwise afford. The second response indicates to a potential funder that an organization is using every available resource to provide emergency food in their community.

Now compare these two statements from two different organizations:

• Volunteers are an important part of our work. They work every day and their energy and commitment make our work possible.
• In 1999, 349 different volunteers contributed 5,250 hours of volunteer service to our program. We estimate the value of their contributions to our work at $47,250.

The first program has no tracking system and the second does. From a funders’ perspective, the second program looks far more attractive.

If you are interested in learning more about assigning an average dollar value for volunteers, check out the Independent Sector at: http://www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer_time.html

How to Find Funders for Emergency Food Programs

The five main sources for funding, individuals, private foundations, corporate foundations, religious sources, and government are compared in the following table:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Things to Consider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individuals</strong></td>
<td>Donations are usually unrestricted — that is, they can be used for any purpose. If you build a strong individual donor program, this can be a more stable source of income than government contracts or private grants.</td>
<td>Usually it takes a few years to establish a donor base. Important to develop tracking system for numerous small and large donations — either Excel or donation software like Raisers Edge. Try to work through your congregation or community to engage donors — people give to people they know. Donors respond better if they have a chance to see and get to know your program (by volunteering, for example) — and if you thank them and keep in touch on a regular basis!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Private Foundations</strong></td>
<td>Foundation grants are relatively large compared to corporate foundations and individual contributions. Tend to fund for 2-3 year cycles (sometimes longer— but not forever!)</td>
<td>Require strong, detailed proposals. Generally take 6-9 months for response — longer if you’re starting from scratch. Prefer funding special projects rather than general support. Chances are better if you establish a working relationship, call the Program Director first to discuss your work and the funder’s priorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corporate Foundations</strong></td>
<td>Applications are generally shorter and less time consuming than private foundation proposals. Tend to fund for many years in a row once you establish a relationship.</td>
<td>Usually difficult to “get in the door”— board or professional contact helps. Grants usually smaller than private foundations. Larger grants require as much work as private foundation proposals. You may disagree with the politics of the corporation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religious Sources</strong></td>
<td>Funding available from both local churches as well as national church organizations. Good source for new, small programs.</td>
<td>Tend to fund denominationally — easier to get funding if you have a relationship with the church, temple, or mosque you’re approaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Government</strong></td>
<td>Government grants and contracts are usually (but not always) larger than those available from other sources.</td>
<td>Need strong financial management system to monitor contract and provide detailed reports. Risk of budget cuts — large contract cuts can be devastating if you rely on this source exclusively.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(This table is modified from From Vision to Reality: A Guide for Forming and Sustaining Community-Based Efforts, by Christina Smith. Published by Community Resource Exchange, www.crenyc.org, (212-894-3394.)
Here are some other tips for securing funds for your EFP:

If you are faith-based, explore your national denominational affiliations. Almost all have some designated funds for hunger missions. Is there a wealthy congregation in your denomination with room in their mission budget?

Collect the annual reports of organizations similar to yours. See what foundations and corporations fund them and contact them.

Collect the annual reports of New-York-City-area foundations. Find out who they fund and at what amount. Solicit those that fund food and anti-poverty organizations.

Research funders through the Foundation Center, www.fdncenter.org, 212-620-4230.

Find out the national affiliations of your local food and restaurant distributors. Find out what major distributors are in your area. Inquire about their philanthropic giving and how you can apply. Write to major food corporations about their philanthropy.

Look at all local businesses and their possible national affiliations.

Ask yourself what other services your EFP provides. Do you use other providers to expand services to your own site or do you provide referrals? If so, you have more ways to pitch your services to funders. Who is the population you are feeding? (For example, if you serve people with mental illness, research organizations that fund programs for the mentally ill.)

How to Ask for Money from Individuals

You don’t have to know wealthy people to succeed in raising money from individuals. Anyone with disposable income can contribute. Small and large gifts all count.

You also don't have to spend a lot of money cultivating donors. You can just show them what you do and who you help.

Spend some time getting to know your donors. Listen intensely to see what they are interested in and how they would like to help. Think of your donors as investors and partners in your program, just as you do your volunteers and clients. Keep them informed of your successes and even your challenges.

Your donor prospects can be:

- Family
- Colleagues
- Friends
- Professional contacts
- Pastor
- Boss
- Neighbors
- Business associates (be sure to ask about matching programs)
- High school or college buddies
- Teachers from high school or college
- People you met in a training who liked your work
- People you exchanged cards with at a fundraiser
The following are tips for the various strategies used in individual fundraising:

**Face-to-Face Appeals**

Meeting someone face to face is the single most effective method for getting a donation from an individual. Basically, it is difficult for someone to look you in the eye and say “I can’t do anything for you,” and it is even harder for someone to say “no” to two people. Your chances of receiving a donation are better if the person being asked knows the person doing the asking. People give to people they know. And remember, the more people you ask, the more donations you are likely to receive.

Getting over the fear of asking for money partly lies in understanding that it is fine if people say no. Another way to feel more comfortable about asking for money is recognizing that you are not asking for something for nothing, nor are you asking for something for yourself. You are simply asking the person to support the work you are doing to fight hunger in your community.

**Personal Phone Calls**

Almost as effective as a face-to-face appeal is a personal phone call from a person to a prospective donor whom he or she knows. The strength of this method is that it is a very quick and easy process. You can speak to a lot more people in a lot less time. The weakness of this method is that since you are not face-to-face with someone, you have to hope that they actually write the check.

You can improve the return rate by sending a follow-up letter with a response card for them to return with their check. This letter should be sent immediately after the call. You can also use the personal phone call to set up a meeting where you can make a face-to-face appeal. This will dramatically improve your chances of getting a gift.

**Personal Letters**

This method involves a letter written by a person fundraising for your organization (friend, board member, clergy, other community leader) to a prospective donor whom he or she knows. This method tends to be easier for those who are afraid to talk to their contacts and ask them for money. (But you should try your best to overcome this fear if you hope to become a successful fundraiser.)

The effectiveness of this approach can be improved by following the letter with a phone call or, even better, with a face-to-face appeal.

**Special events**

When people think about raising money from individuals, they often decide to throw a party or gala event. Unfortunately, with the substantial amount of money that must be paid up front for these events, an organization might end up losing money or just breaking even.

Special events, however, can be a good “point of entry” for people into your donor circle. You can also keep the events cheap. For example, a tour of your soup kitchen for prospective donors followed by a picture tour of all the work your program has done or a wine-and-cheese hosted by one of your board members can be quite effective.
Two things should happen at any event:
- Someone should provide the basic facts about what your program does.
- There should be an emotional hook (such as live or written testimony from your clients).

Be as imaginative as possible and you can do special events without spending much money. Follow up with people who attended to ask for their feedback and financial support.

**Direct Mail**
Nonprofit groups who use direct mail do it with the knowledge that it is not very lucrative, but is an effective way to educate donors and find a few regular ones who can then be asked for more money. Large groups like the Red Cross maintain substantial databases that they update regularly. Direct mail appeals can make some money if letters are mailed to many thousands of people. The cost per letter then comes down to a point where a profit becomes possible even with a small rate of response (typically not more than one or two percent).

The amount of time and energy required to make a direct mail solicitation work are rare in the emergency food world. Such an impersonal and resource-intensive type of fundraising is not very effective for most EFPs. What may be more cost-effective are targeted mailings to people closer to your organization, such as mailings to previous donors, people who receive your newsletter (include a brief appeal in every issue), and volunteers.

**Establishing a Strong Individual Fundraising System**
One of the keys to raising money from individuals is to think of asking for money as only one part of a larger cycle of cultivating your donors. In order to increase the number of people supporting you each year, and in order to convince some of your current donors to give more money in the future, you need to do more than just ask for a donation. You will have to cultivate the relationship and develop a system for keeping track of your donors.

**Finding Likely Donors**
Before you can ask for money using any of the methods described earlier, you need to identify who is likely to give you money.

Your individual donors could be people who are connected with the organization, whether as board members, staff members, volunteers, or friends of volunteers. Many agencies do brainstorming sessions with their key stakeholders (board, staff, volunteers, and consumers) to generate potential supporters. Another good way to build a list of potential supporters is to always have a sign-in sheet at any event or open house you sponsor.

Again, your community—the people most impacted by the issue of hunger in their neighborhood—should be your first step in generating this list.
Regardless of whether you are approaching an individual or foundation, your chances of getting a gift (and of getting a larger gift) improve if you have established a professional relationship with the donor, and if the donor knows and sees what you are doing. For cultivating individual donors, design an inexpensive “point of entry” event (as discussed in “Special Events”) to show donors the wonderful things you do in your community.

**Asking For Donations**
You know who you want to ask, now comes the asking. After deciding what approach you will take, have your documentation ready in case anyone asks questions. Work in partnership with others—have an experienced volunteer or board member look at your proposal or go with you to a donor meeting. No matter who is doing the asking, your organization should have a consistent “case for support” message to ensure that everyone asking for money for your programs has a consistent message.

**Receiving Donations**
Here’s where you reap the fruit of your labor! The work’s not over though. It is essential that you:
- Log checks as they come in (it’s often a good idea to make a copy)
- Record them as revenue in your bookkeeping system
- Deposit checks promptly
- Record donations in your donor filing system

**Acknowledging the Donation**
Sending a postcard or letter thanking donors for their contributions serves an important purpose. It helps you build a relationship with the people who have donated money. By letting your donors know that their gifts are truly appreciated, you can help ensure that they will donate again in the future. By law, you are required to acknowledge in writing gifts over $250. However, it is a good idea to acknowledge all gifts.

All acknowledgements should contain some form of the following language: “XYZ Food Kitchen is a 501(c)3 approved organization, and your contribution is tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by the law. Please note that no goods or services were rendered in exchange for this contribution. In accordance with state law, you may request a copy of our last annual report either from us or from the Attorney General at State of New York, Office of the Attorney General, Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10721.”

**Recording Donor Information**
You don’t need to be very computer savvy to know how to do this. Using index cards will get you started. Note the donors’ names, addresses, phone and fax numbers, date of donation and amount. Transferring this data to a spreadsheet format like Excel or Access will make it even easier for you to stay on top of the donations you will be receiving. You can also use a free, web-based service, such as www.ebase.org to help you track your donors.

More elaborate database systems can be expensive but are an investment — companies to research include: Raiser’s edge (http://www.blackbaud.com/products/fundraising/raisersedge.aspx), GiftWorks (http://www.missionresearch.com/index.html), Convio (http://www.convio.com/).
If you are technologically savvy, there are also free of charge, open-source systems such as Sugar CRM (http://www.sugarcrm.com/crm/products/crm-products.html) and CiviCRM (http://civicrm.org/) which are very effective systems but require more personal time and technical investment since there is limited technical support available for these systems.

**Keep Donors Informed**
Between fundraising campaigns, it is a good idea to keep your funders informed of what’s going on with your organization. Treat your donors like investors—they have invested in your programs and they want to know what their dollars made possible. Share a client story, how your programs provided food for children in the area, how you were able to make a difference in a family’s life—let donors know that when they give to your programs, they’re making a significant impact in their community. The traditional newsletter works well, particularly if you include stories about or by people who have benefited from your service, or you describe experiences with volunteers.

**How to Ask for Money from Foundations and Corporations**
Writing grant applications to foundations or a letter to a corporation asking for support will be easier if you’ve done the work of developing an Organizational Plan and a Fundraising Strategy. The Foundation Center in New York, www.fdncenter.org, 212-620-4230 has a very good proposal writing seminar, as do several other resource centers.

Brainstorming with your stakeholders can help you identify potential sources for funding, especially if one of your board members or volunteers has a contact. Do your homework before you spend any time writing a grant. In particular, make sure your program fits the funder’s guidelines.

Grant writing is only part of the process of raising money from foundations or corporations. Cultivation of an ongoing professional relationship with a funder is the other part of the equation that equals success. Funders need to know you and what you do in order to be your partners and allies. They need to be kept informed and acknowledged for their support on a regular basis.

When cultivating relationships with foundations and corporations, try to speak to someone (such as a program officer or a community relations manager) at a foundation or corporation before and after you submit a proposal. Prepare your questions and information very carefully. Offer a site visit if appropriate. Get your board members or their contacts to open doors.
Organizations Making Grants to Hunger Groups

There are relatively few organizations who fund programs only fighting hunger and not offering other services. Here’s a list of those with a strong record of supporting EFPs:

**New York Community Trust**
Two Park Avenue  
New York, NY 10016  
212-686-0100  
www.nycommunitytrust.org

**MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger**
1990 S. Bundy Dr., Ste. 260  
Los Angeles, CA 90025-5232  
310-442-0030  
www.mazon.org

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America/ Division For Church In Society Domestic Hunger Program**
8765 West Higgins Road, 9th Floor  
Chicago, IL 60631  
1-800-638-3522 ext. 2693  
773-380-2700  
http://www.elca.org/grantinghope/

**Robin Hood Foundation**
826 Broadway 7th Floor  
New York, NY 10003  
212-227-6601  
212-227-6698

**United Methodist Committee on Relief General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church**
475 Riverside Drive, Room 330  
New York, NY 10115  
212-870-3816  
http://gbgm-umc.org/umcor/hunger.stm

**United Way of New York City Hunger Prevention & Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP)**
2 Park Avenue  
New York, NY 10016  
212-251-2500  
www.uwnyc.org
Working with Volunteers
Volunteers are the lifeblood of the nonprofit world. They provide the human power that enables thousands of organizations to fulfill their missions. This section is designed to help you find, train, and retain the kind of volunteers that can make your EFP more effective.

Before you begin recruiting people to help, be sure you know what you want them to do. Spend time organizing the tasks involved in either preparing a meal or running a food pantry. Ask yourselves some questions: How many people do you need and how long will you need them? Do you need people for one-time jobs or will you need to schedule volunteers on an ongoing basis? What special skills are required?

Where to Look for Volunteers

Online. HFA’s own HungerVolunteer.org provides a platform for organizations seeking volunteers to post available opportunities. There is also a comprehensive library of volunteer management resources available for you to use for free.

HungerVolunteer.org is a website created by HFA targeted towards emergency food programs and other hunger-related initiatives to post and engage potential volunteers in both direct service and capacity building opportunities. Hunger Free America’s Strategic Volunteerism team is here to offer you personal support. Just email help@hungervolunteer.org.

HUNGER VOLUNTEER.ORG

Other websites to consider are Idealist.org, VolunteerMatch.com, and HungerVolunteerConnection.com.
In Your Community. Volunteers can be found throughout your community. The following list should give you some ideas about where to look. Just like fundraising, the first rule is to ask!

- People who use your food program
- Business and professional organizations
- Chambers of Commerce
- Churches and other religious groups
- Community service restitution programs
- Families and friends
- Job training programs in food service
- Military units and retired military personnel
- New York Cares and other organizations that recruit volunteers
- Rehabilitation agencies/programs
- Retired executives and teachers associations
- Schools
- Scout troops or other youth groups
- Senior citizens groups/Senior Corps Program
- Service organizations like Kiwanis, Rotary Club
- Sororities and fraternities
- Students seeking internships and service opportunities
- University/college/community college organizations

Tips for getting and keeping volunteers:

Seek diversity.
Volunteers have a range of abilities and come from all backgrounds, races, nationalities, religions, and generations. If you limit yourself to a preconceived notion of who is likely to volunteer, you may find yourself scrubbing a lot of pots and pans alone!

Recruitment is a year-round responsibility.
Once you have a steady pool of people helping you, be sure not to rely on them so often that you burn them out. Keep looking for opportunities to add to your talented group of volunteers. Cultivate friends, network, and keep written materials about your volunteer needs up-to-date and visible.

Keep good records.
Add the names, addresses, and phone numbers of volunteers to your mailing list. Be sure they get your newsletter and offer them an opportunity to support your program with a contribution. Volunteers can also be loyal financial supporters! If they like your program enough to give you their time, they may also give you their money.

Make volunteers comfortable.
Provide the proper tools and a comfortable workplace for your volunteers. Easy access to coffee and snacks will make them feel at home. Most importantly, make sure they understand the job they are being asked to do.
Using Electronic and Web-based Resources to Improve Your Program

In this digital and internet age, it is important to utilize available resources to optimize organizational operations. Electronically, computers can help keep track of food inventory, volunteer inquiries and involvement, and clients/customers served. In fact, electronic records are required to report back and keep track of food orders, people served, etc. on FeedNYC, http://www.feednyc.org, (the online portal that NYC based EFPs use to monitor and report back on public sources of programmatic programs.)

Nowadays, most retail computers come equipped with basic word processing and spreadsheet (record keeping) programs. If resources are, however, unavailable to purchase a new computers, organizations may try to solicit an in-kind donation of an older computer. Regardless of the age of the computer, most have the adequate capabilities required to meet the needs of most emergency food programs. You can post an ad online (via. Craigslist, Idealist, etc.) or try to ask community members directly.

Basic Computer Uses

Most computers operate on either a Microsoft Windows or a Mac (Apple) system. Each system accommodates different basic computing programs. Most use Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.) but there are free alternatives available, if you do not have access to this software. Apache OpenOffice (http://www.openoffice.org) and Google Drive (https://www.google.com/drive/) are two examples.

There are other technologies available that can be used for these purposes as well. You may consider purchasing (or soliciting the donation of) a tablet or budget laptop (e.g. Chromebook, a Google product that uses an operating system that only works with internet access and stores information online instead of in a hard drive located on the device itself). An additional benefit to having a tablet or a budget laptop, as opposed to a desktop computer, is portability.

Some general functions that EFPs can utilize with basic computing include:

Keeping Records
Record keeping is essential for multiple reasons in starting and building an EFP. As this guide has already mentioned with building a budget, soliciting donations, and keeping track of inventory, a spreadsheet or database software (e.g. Microsoft Excel, Access, or Salesforce) can also be used to keep track of volunteer inquiries, recording hours served, and compile required client/customer information for grant reporting. (Side note: Grants for food pantries vs. soup kitchens require collecting more comprehensive demographic information from clients/customers)

For tracking either client/customer information and/or volunteer information, it is best to create a normal contact form. Columns could be labeled, for instance, as: First Name, Last Name, Address, City, State, Zip, Referral by, Family Size, etc. If further assistance is needed in learning how to set up a spreadsheet or use these types of programs, YouTube has a lot of excellent tutorials available online. These tutorials can be found by doing a general search for “Excel Tutorials” or related topics.
Keeping In Touch
As access to computers and cell phones increases, the more people rely on email and other forms of digital communications to keep in touch with one another. With this in mind, using technology to stay in touch with potential volunteers, funders, or other stakeholders is crucial.

Some of the basic, aforementioned, software can be used in these efforts. For instance, Microsoft Outlook (an email program) can be used to set up email groups to send the same messages to, examples of this would include: a Volunteer Newsletter and funding requests.

Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel can also be used to set up what is known as a mail merge. If an EFP needs to send out personally addressed letters (or emails) out, a mail merge can be set up to automatically create these using information extracted from Excel into preset “fields” in Word. A “field” is a label created by Excel to categorize information (e.g. “First Name,” “Last Name,” etc.) For more information about mail merges and how to set them up, please visit https://support.office.com/en-us/article/Word-mail-merge-A-walk-through-the-process-4ad61088-e108-4f56-b60d-e3c7d30c954a.

There are also web-based applications and channels available to maintain digital communications with groups of people. Social media (e.g. Facebook or Twitter) is a great way to key stakeholders up to date on what is going on with your program as well as opportunities that may be coming up. In most cases, an email address is the only thing that is needed to sign up for an account with these websites.

Once signed up, an EFP can direct traffic to their social media through word-of-mouth and connecting with similar or partnering organizations through these sites and by posting content on a fairly regular basis. Twitter limits messages to 140 characters and as such, one key tip when using Twitter is to use a URL shortener (e.g. Bitly or Google URL shortener) to lessen the number of characters of a website address. Additional web-based applications that may assist with maintaining regular communication with stakeholder include: MailChimp, a paid service that can assist with sending mass-mailings, GroupMe, an application that establishes group chats, and HootSuite, another paid service that enables a user to post on multiple social media platforms simultaneously.

Plentiful for Pantries: Make Reservations for Pantry Appointments

Plentiful is a free, easy-to-use reservation system for food pantries and the people they serve. Use Plentiful to stay organized and provide better service. Download it for free here: https://www.plentifulapp.com/

Plentiful is a project of the NYC Food Assistance Collaborative.
Useful Resources for Managing Your Emergency Food Program

The following resources, sorted by area of assistance, can be of real use to you. We have also sorted the resources in each area by whether they’re available locally or only on the Internet.

Many of the local organizations listed have on-site training and other resources available to you, sometimes for free.

In addition, many of these organizations’ websites provide other useful links and have listservs or newswire services to which you can subscribe.

General Resources

Community Resource Exchange
www.crenyc.org
212-894-3394
Individualized technical assistance in various areas.

Foundation Center
www.fdncenter.org/newyork
212-620-4230
Trainings in various areas, with a focus on fundraising. Many of the trainings are free.

Alliance For Nonprofit Management
www.allianceonline.org
FAQs on board development, financial management, planning, fundraising, risk management.

Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies
www.fpwa.org
212-777-4800
Trainings in various areas including nonprofit management, clinical work, computer skills. Individualized technical assistance available to member agencies.

National Executive Service Corps
www.nesc.org
212-269-1234
Consultants available in many different areas of nonprofit management.

Nonprofit Coordinating Committee of New York
www.npccnyc.org
212-502-4191
Great checklist for start-up nonprofits, some articles available to non-members.
United Way of New York City
http://www.unitedwaynyc.org/
212-251-4109
Individualized technical assistance in various nonprofit management areas.

Idealist’s List of Resources for Nonprofits
http://www.idealist.org/info/Nonprofits
Comprehensive list of resources and general information about nonprofits.
The Nonprofit FAQ
http://nccsdataweb.urban.org/PubApps/nonprofitfaq.php
Answers to questions for just about any aspect of nonprofits.

Innovation Network
www.innonet.org
Free online work plans that nonprofits can create in the areas of program planning, evaluation, budgeting, and grant writing. Links to various resources; data collection tools.

Management Assistance Program for Nonprofits
http://www.mapfornonprofits.org/resources/
The Management Library contains a great deal of information on nonprofit management.

Governance Matters
http://governancemattersusa.org/
Resources available for best practices in board development. Innovative consultancy services also available.

Nonprofit Finance Fund
www.nonprofitfinancefund.org
212-868-6710
The New York City office has individualized technical assistance and training in facilities projects and financial planning, online articles and publications

Greater New York Chapter- Association of Fundraising Professionals
www.nycafp.org
212-582-8565
Workshops, offers an annual one-day fundraising conference (scholarships available).

Lawyer’s Alliance of New York
www.lany.org
212-219-1800
Workshops, individualized assistance, publications on many legal issues important to nonprofits, including 501(c) 3 incorporation and tax exemption

NPower
www.npower.org
212-564-7010
This is a membership organization that provides technology consulting, training, and support services to its members. Free guides are available on their website.
NYC Service
www.nycservice.org
212-788-7550
As a division of the Mayor’s Office, local organizations can post available volunteer opportunities on this website and apply to potentially receive NYC Civic Corps (an AmeriCorps affiliate program) member.

New York Cares
www.nycares.org
212-228-5000
New York Cares mobilizes groups of volunteers. They also coordinate individual volunteers who specialize in giving technological help to nonprofits.

Volunteer Match
www.volunteermatch.org
Nonprofits can post volunteer opportunities, and volunteers can search for potential matches. Postings are sorted into the following volunteer categories: kids, teens, seniors, and groups.
Hunger Free America/New York City (formerly the NYC Coalition Against Hunger) emerged in 1983 after community leaders from all five boroughs concluded the best way to tackle hunger in the City was with a unified organization that helped food pantries and soup kitchens advocate for long-term solutions to hunger. Today, HFNYC represents the over 1.4 million low-income New York City residents forced to rely upon these agencies for food. HFNYC works to ensure that all low-income New Yorkers have enough to eat by working to enact the policies and programs necessary to end domestic hunger and ensure that all Americans have sufficient access to nutritious food.

HFNYC has developed a national reputation for pioneering effective new ways for these agencies to: build their capacities and expand their programming; advocate for improved governmental and economic policies that address the underlying causes of hunger; ensure that low-income families receive the government nutrition and tax benefits to which they are legally entitled; harmonize and coordinate services with each other; and develop the next generation of anti-hunger and anti-poverty leaders.

**HFA/NYC’s Current Programs:**

The **Benefits Access Program** helps pantries and kitchens to connect their clients with key anti-hunger and anti-poverty programs, including: Food Stamps; Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); Child and Family Health Plus; School Meals; After-School Snacks; Summer Meals; and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). HFNYC’s outreach and advocacy work has helped make participation in the food stamps program 785,185 people higher than when Mayor Bloomberg took office as of September 2009. As a consequence of the increased participation, low-income New Yorkers now receive
$90 million per month — over $1 billion per year — more today in food stamps benefits than they did in January of 2002.

The Research, Policy, Advocacy, and Organizing Departments determine the extent of—and the causes of—hunger in New York City and America and proposes innovative yet practical ways to tackle the problem. HFA/NYC conducts extensive field research for its annual hunger survey, which is the City’s most comprehensive annual study of hunger. In addition to our annual hunger reports, in 2006, HFA/NYC released “Hunger and Obesity in East Harlem: Environmental and Influences on Urban Food Access”, an in-depth study of the challenges of hunger and obesity in this area of the City.

The organization’s Communications work uses the mass media, social media, newsletters, and other creative ways of message delivery to inform New Yorkers about the hunger problem and concrete ways they can help address it. The hunger survey results receive wide public attention including media coverage from venues including The New York Times, National Public Radio, The British Independent and BBC News, Bloomberg, and The Daily News.

The Ending Hunger Through Citizen Service Initiative places hundreds of volunteers at kitchens and pantries to help meet basic needs such as stocking shelves and serving customers. HFA/NYC is also committed to recruiting long-term, professionally skilled volunteers to help kitchens and pantries perform tasks essential to their program development, such as fundraising, computer skills training, graphic design, and accounting. In 2016 HFA recruited over 9,924 volunteers for opportunities at anti-hunger organizations, including soup kitchens and food pantries.

HFA’s nationwide AmeriCorps VISTA program, the Anti-Hunger and Opportunity Corps, aims to partner with some of the nation’s most effective and innovative nonprofit organizations in the fight against hunger by engaging Americans in HFA’s mission of “moving society beyond the soup kitchen” by breaking down barriers and providing improved access to healthful, nutritious foods via benefit utilization, including SNAP (the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as the Food Stamps program), the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and others. Participants in the Summer Associate program build partner organizations’ capacity and sustainability, as well as provide some direct services in support of nutrition education, SNAP, SFSP and other anti-hunger programs.

Since 2015, Hunger Free America has been operating the USDA National Hunger Hotline. The hotline is a resource for individuals and families seeking information on how to obtain food. The National Hunger Hotline staff connects callers with emergency food providers in their community, government assistance programs, and various social services. During summer months, the hotline serves as a vital resource connecting children 18 years old and under at approved sites in areas with significant concentrations of low-income children. The hotline can be reached at 1-866-3-HUNGRY or 1-877-8-HAMBRE (for Spanish) from Monday through Friday (8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET).