COVID-19

Food Bank Responses and Best Practices

Updated: 21st April 2020
COVID-19 SITUATION REPORT
Food Banking Responses and Best Practices
UPDATED – 21st APRIL 2020

About this Document:

These insights are drawn from reports by GFN member food banks and partners facing operational issues associated with local COVID-19 outbreaks (now impacting more than 190 countries with confirmed cases). This is not an exhaustive list of reports or recommendations and the World Health Organization and national governments and public health authorities in your country should be used for official information. This report is a weekly update intended to share learnings with the GFN network and global partner organizations to help all areas prepare for, respond to and eventually aid in long term recovery to community impact resulting from the COVID-19 virus as it spreads.

Many of the examples used in this document have supporting information and templates. This supporting information is available to view and download at this link (NOTE: Some of the supporting documentation is only available in its original language):

https://foodbanking.box.com/s/vfy77wivpxmd3o03rfvrzal94w4l6l03

If you would like to share examples from your food bank, please e-mail GFN at: akitchen@foodbanking.org

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1. COVID-19 Information
GFN encourages member food banks to seek guidance on COVID-19 from the World Health Organization (WHO) and their own respective national governments:
- Daily situation reports can be found here.
- Information on how to protect yourself here.
- Information on how to prepare your workplace here, including draft signage. This includes evidence-based information on how to use masks and hand sanitizer, which are in significant shortage globally. Please review, as health systems are at or over capacity and personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies are in very short supply.
- With significantly increased travel restrictions globally, here the WHO also offers travel guidance.

GFN is providing a global news roundup on a regular basis that we will circulate to those interested. Please contact aceretti@foodbanking.org to subscribe. This should not be used as an exhaustive or authoritative resource; please consult the World Health Organization for more definitive information.

2. COVID-19 Implications Across the GFN Network
COVID-19 cases are now confirmed in 192 countries and territories according to the WHO and has spread to every GFN member country with varying degrees of severity and transmission levels. All food banks in the GFN Network are engaged in some level of preparedness, immediate response or on-going recovery support for those they serve.

The examples below are based on food banks’ experiences to date. They are included here to showcase effective examples of food bank solutions helping to ensure critical supplies continue to be delivered to the people that they serve.

2.1 Keeping Staff Safe
All organizations report heightened attention toward food bank employees and volunteers:
- All food banks are following local government guidelines and mandates for community quarantines and "shelter in place" orders.
- Even before travel bans were put in place around the world, many food banks restricted travel for staff.
- Many food banks have circulated information on how COVID-19 is transmitted, methods for reducing transmission, and mandated that those with fever/cold symptoms stay home until they have fully recovered.
- The Global Cold Chain Alliance (GCCA) has developed a guide of what steps to take if one of your staff or volunteers gets COVID-19.
  - Supporting Info: GCCA_What to do if an employee has COVID-19_EN.pdf
- Feeding America and the European Food Banks Federation have put together advisory groups to share information amongst their members on preparing for and responding to this crisis.
  - Supporting Info: USA_Feeding America - Human Resources Update.pdf
- Feeding America has setup an internal Helpdesk dedicated to the COVID-19 crisis. The Helpdesk is there to field requests from the member food banks and respond accordingly.
- Food safety is always essential for food banks, but with COVID-19 some extra precautions should be taken:
• APPENDIX 2 of this document provides a guide to safe food handling.
• The WHO has released a Food safety Guide:
  • Supporting Info: WHO_Food Safety Guide_EN.pdf
• The food banks in France have introduced these new protocols:
  • Personal protection: mandated that all staff wash their hands with soap; otherwise
    with hydroalcoholic gel; cleaning surfaces with bleach (door handles, stainless steel
    table) every day.
  • Trucks: Disinfecting the truck cabin at the end of each journey.
• The food banks in Norway have introduced these new protocols:
  • Mandating the use of antibacterial hand sanitizer before entering the food bank.
  • Only allowing one charity to collect food at a time and imposing a maximum of two
    people from each charity being allowed inside the food bank.
  • All visits to the food bank need to be pre-scheduled online or via phone.
• Additional advice from Foodbank Australia:
  • “We are also ensuring mental health support and/or resources are made available to
    teams, noting that people across large parts of Australia have already experienced a
    heightened state of emotions associated with the bushfire threat and may be more
    susceptible to feeling overwhelmed, uncertain or anxious about the impact of COVID-19.
    Videoconferencing is being utilized wherever possible to reduce the impacts of social
    isolation”.
  • GFN’s Latin America team held a webinar with the food banks in the region entitled, “How to
    Manage Stress in Times of Disaster”. A psychiatrist specializing in crisis situations spoke on how
    to support food bank staff with the personal mental health impact of food banks’ work.
  • WhatsApp groups and Zoom chats are being used by teams as ways to stay in contact with
    colleagues as well as provide ways to interact with family and friends beyond work.
    • The food bank in Japan is recommending very short (15 minute) daily meetings via Zoom /
      Skype so everyone is kept in the loop of key developments.

2.2 Changing Service Models

Many charity partners are closing. Those which are able to remain open are seeing large increases in
the number of people needing help. This reflects the increase in overall need as unemployment
skyrockets due to businesses closing as well as the clients normally served by agencies forced to close,
now looking for new sources of charitable food. Food banks have experienced increased requests for
assistance exceeding 100% from agencies that had served only 25 families per week pre COVID-19 but
are now serving 100+ families per week.

• One GFN member recommends that, in case of shortage of staff, to concentrate the available
  staff on the preparation and distribution of dry and stable products because fresh products
  require more resources (collecting, sorting, etc.).
• Also, they suggest that non-physical activities can be done remotely depending on the activity
  and the mission.
• Some food banks in Argentina are now delivering meal bags for families to cook at home when
  the agencies are no longer serving food onsite.
• Some South American food banks are suspending some client services like nutrition education in
  order to focus on food distribution.
• FoodCycle in Indonesia are providing ready meals for frontline healthcare workers. So far, 25 medical facilities have registered and FoodCycle is buying ready meals (USD $0.90 – $1.20) and distributing them to the hospitals and clinics.

• The Food Bank Singapore has launched a novel initiative involving financial donors buying food for Food Bank from local food suppliers and small businesses who themselves are struggling in the lockdown:

2.3 Distribution Challenges
More agency partners of food banks are closing, and congregate feeding is not possible or is challenging in most communities – either due to a lack of volunteers/staff, or due to government bans on group gatherings / social distancing. To maintain operations, food banks may consider developing alternative means for distribution – especially to populations that are most at risk for COVID-19.

• Tikyet Um Ali (TUA) in Jordan, which does large congregate feeding several days a week, asked clients to share their contact information so that it can deliver meals should it be unsafe to congregate.

• Several food banks report that they are trying to create boxes of key staples to deliver to seniors directly. With adequate resources, direct distribution programs could be expanded to other demographic groups such as families with children and the disabled.

• Feeding America is looking into online ordering for beneficiaries and is exploring working with package delivery services to provide meals to those that need to self-isolate.

• Feeding America food banks are offering drive-thru pantries in many service areas – either at the food bank or a partner agency location – to limit person to person contact.

• Several food banks have added more information to their websites and on social media channels to make it easier for clients to find information on how to get food relief.

• Many food banks across multiple regions are making kits of essential supplies to provide to families.
  o The food bank in Uruguay is now making food and hygiene product kits for a family of 5 for one week recognizing the broader need for supplies beyond food for those they serve.
  o FoodCycle in Indonesia is providing kits consisting of rice, eggs, cooking oil, soy sauce, chicken stock, teabags and biscuits.
    ▪ Supporting Info: Indonesia_Ingredients in Family Kits.pdf

• Feeding India - As the crisis around the COVID-19 pandemic grows, the livelihoods of a large number of families surviving on daily wages have been shaken up. The food bank has initiated the ‘Feed the Daily Wager’ project to provide food support to such families and to help them have a reliable supply of meals in the absence of employment opportunities. Each meal kit (for a family of 5) contains a combination of wheat, flour, rice and two types of pulses that can be used to cook meals for the family for a week. Each kit for a family costs INR ₹500. All donations are being used to procure and distribute meal kits to families of daily wage earners across multiple cities. We have partnered with multiple NGOs on ground to help ensure responsible distribution of these kits while adhering to social distancing guidelines.

• In Canada the government will provide grants to corporations that have seen at least a 30% drop in revenue to subsidize 75% of the company's salary expenses, up to (CAD $45,000). A car dealership has taken advantage of that subsidy to retain its employees and has then deployed the employees with cars from its lot to provide transportation support for local food banks. The
dealership employees pick up food at the food bank to transport to the clients of the food banks, providing valuable and safe logistics support.

- In Colombia the largest beer brewery has donated their trucks and drivers to help distribute food around the food bank network. 30 trucks with a capacity of 10 tons, and 7 trucks with a capacity of 30 tons have been made available and so far, have transported 330 tons of product which has assisted 404,000 people.
- In Quito, Ecuador, General Motors has lent the food bank two trucks (free of charge) so the food bank can transport the extra volume of food.

2.4 Product Donation Trends

Product donation is reduced due to panic buying and supply chain disruptions. Public panic buying and hoarding of food and grocery products (as well as personal care items like toilet paper, anti-bacterial soaps, hand sanitizers, etc.) is creating shortages of products that would otherwise be available for donation to food banks. Countries heavily dependent on imported product are also seeing this valued source of donations diminish.

- In the US when local governments closed restaurants and bars with little notice, food banks and charity partners reacted quickly to pick up perishable inventories and distributed to those in need.
- In Singapore, Marina Bay Sands, a large resort complex, is closing for a month due to the lockdown. The resort arranged for the restaurants on its premises to donate bread, vegetables, fruit, meat, dairy products and 3,600 eggs to The Food Bank Singapore:  

  - Some food banks are actively sourcing and distributing valuable personal care and home essentials to help serve their communities.
    - The food bank in El Salvador reached out to Unilever who gave them cleaning and personal hygiene products to take to the shelters.
    - Several food banks reported accelerating their conversations with donors so that they can continue to support with product donations and add special fundraising campaigns.
    - In some food bank networks, large food drives are being cancelled (for example, Easter food drives). However, in other communities, small scale product collection campaigns are being conducted – with partners that also deliver the food to the food bank.
      - In Greece the food bank is working on an Easter food collection with online retailers.
      - Feeding Hong Kong sent out a clear and simple appeal for basic goods that they include in kits for families. The appeal also stated two locations where people can drop off the items.
    - Supporting Info: [Hong Kong_Appeal for Essential Items.pdf](#)

    - Foodbank Australia reports that food banks are placing limits on agency access to key product lines ranging from toilet paper, tissues, hand sanitizer and soap to shelf-stable products such as UHT milk, pasta, rice, pasta sauce etc. to ensure available product is shared as much as possible across their communities.
    - Foodbank Australia also reports a positive response from key retail partners to formalize short-term, mandated allocations for food relief in light of current demand. One major retailer has pledged to donate the equivalent of AUD $1 million in food and essential products every week.
      - Supporting Info: [Australia_Press Release on Increased Retailer Donations.pdf](#)
    - In the UK, Tesco has made a similar pledge to provide GBP £15 million worth of food over the
next 12 weeks, as well as significant financial resources:

- The National Network in Argentina is now training all food banks in agricultural recovery from the fields and the produce markets which is a key opportunity for all communities as supply chains slow and valuable fruits and vegetables remain unharvested.
- Some food banks are contacting import/export companies where surplus product may be available as restrictions result in excess food with no market.
- The food banks in Colombia are approaching airlines asking if they have surplus food available given the sudden and drastic reduction in the number of flights.

2.5 Increased Purchasing of Product

Due to the dramatic decrease in donated product, many food banks are switching to purchasing food and essential supplies.

- Many GFN members already have partnerships with food suppliers and are leveraging them to replace the reduction in donated surplus food with quality, high nutrient foods at a fair price.
- The food bank in Chile is working directly with local wholesalers to explore the options of buying products in case of shortages in donations.
- Members already relying on purchased food are meeting with suppliers to try and secure ongoing supply as manufacturers of high demand items struggle to keep inventories available.
- Supporting Info: [GFN Procurement in Disaster_EN.pdf (English & Spanish)](GFN%20Procurement%20in%20Disaster_EN.pdf)

2.6 Inability to Collect Products from Donors

Logistics challenges are unique to each country, but product collections by food banks are being disrupted in most countries:

- Uber has expressed an interest in helping with logistical challenges. Food banks with Uber operations in their countries should contact their local Uber offices. Also consider other rideshare companies or taxis to aid in product movement – IF THEY CAN HANDLE FOOD PRODUCT following safe food handling guidelines.
- A Feeding America food bank is working with a school bus company in their community to use the drivers and buses that would otherwise sit idle, to deliver food packages to families. A bonus is the drivers know the neighborhoods and the children recognize the drivers.

2.7 Fundraising Trends

Fundraising in most cases is diminished across all sources of funds:

- Where new funders are being identified, they are in reaction to a newspaper story or a local news interview. Prioritizing an enhanced media outreach through various channels (social and traditional) should be considered as a necessary tactic to secure financial resources and raise awareness with government and business sector supporters.
- Increased use of Skype, Zoom and other online video tools enable ‘face to face’ donor conversations which are more effective.
- A minority of food banks are seeing financial donations increase as corporations and other entities want to respond to the crisis. All food banks should be asking companies and individuals
to donate money to support your efforts in the COVID-19 response.

- One of the food banks in Colombia has created a nice poster explaining their campaign:
  - Supporting Info: Colombia_Appeal for Funds and Food.jpg
- FEBA has established a specific “Social Emergency Fund” to support their Member food banks in their response to COVID-19: https://lp.eurofoodbank.org/social-emergency-fund/
- Feeding Hong Kong is conducting a “virtual food drive” in which the public are asked to donate money so the food bank can purchase essential items. The virtual food drive is supported by a clean and clear webpage which shows donors what their money is being used for:
  - https://feedinghk.org/virtual-food-drive/?fbclid=IwAR0RMeIKHNEv_od0tswdvWjk7lPaDMC0FO7_plSSbEtwrONKzuZAHVCqc
- Some food banks are utilizing online fundraising tools that allow virtual engagement, create community awareness as well as generate vital donations from the general public. Always check if the platform will take a % of the funds raised as a payment.
- Consider asking tech-savvy, home-bound students to help with fundraising – social media is what they do! Let them create Facebook fundraisers and update the food bank website.
  - FareShare has a Facebook fundraiser live now – and five individuals also currently raising funds through Facebook as their birthday request to support FareShare.
- Feeding America has made available state by state fundraising websites. Each food bank can opt in and this turnkey solution allows any entity (government, corporation, individual) to make a donation very easily to the food bank(s) in that state.
- The food banks in Germany are seeing sharp rises in utility bills (especially water due to extra cleaning). Therefore, they are exploring ways to partner with utility companies to provide discounts or in-kind donations of essential utilities which would significantly lower their operating costs.
- In Colombia, one of the main petrol companies has made an in-kind donation of enough petrol for the entire vehicle fleet of the Colombian Food Bank Network.

2.8 Volunteer Trends
Volunteer support has been significantly reduced in most communities either due to government directive or voluntary preventative measures. Food banks are engaging in creative efforts to maintain services by hiring temporary staff, working with government and the military to provide services, changing hours and work shifts to essential hours, and instituting delivery drop-off sites to stretch staff resources.

- Where citizen movement is not yet restricted, some organizations are hiring/considering temporary staff to maintain distribution channels.
- Where volunteering has not yet been impacted, food banks are implementing enhanced personal safety precautions.
- Food banks are now also using social media to update volunteers of operating hours and to share current needs with donors.
- Second Harvest Japan is asking all volunteers to record their temperature before they start their shift and submit contact information to the food bank in case they need to contact them later should someone with whom they were in contact fall ill.
- Food Lifeline in Seattle, USA is no longer accepting new volunteer groups but is relying on regular volunteers that are well-trained.
- Foodbank Australia has raised this concern with appropriate government committees and is considering many options including engagement of the military in a workforce capacity to assist
Foodbank operations and if possible, what conditions would trigger that support.

- The food bank in Cordoba, Argentina, and Cali, Colombia have an alliance with the Army. The Army is providing people to help sort, classify and pack products into kits for families, and then help with distribution to the families. In Cali, this is an extension of the alliance with the Army that the food bank started in 2015.
- Some food banks are pooling volunteers with other charities in their communities, making the most of available people that are able and willing to help.
- Online volunteer websites are a great resource to identify pro-bono services beyond the traditional warehouse packing activities. Supplement staff being deployed from other tasks to distribute food: accounting, communications, reporting, etc. can be done by skilled based volunteers – and virtually!
- Red Cross has proven to be a good source for much needed volunteers in some Latin American countries where the Red Cross has reached out to their lists of trained volunteers to help food banks.
  - In the UK, FareShare is working with large charitable organizations to pool volunteers.

2.9 Raising Public Awareness

Creating community awareness of food banks’ role in COVID-19 response as well as the escalated need for support is a common challenge across the GFN network, especially with the immediate focus on accessing and distributing food. Here are links to some food banks communications:

- **Food Forward, South Africa:**
- **Food For All Africa, Ghana:**
  https://www.facebook.com/food4allghana/videos/1873850822750529/
- **Foodbank Australia:**
  https://www.facebook.com/FoodbankAus/videos/1618021281737415/
- In the UK, one of FareShare’s retail partners had planned a TV advertising campaign over Easter. As the original messaging was encouraging families to get together to celebrate Easter, the retailer is no longer going to run the adverts. Therefore, they have decided to donate the airtime slots to FareShare so they can promote their work and make an appeal. You can see the advert here:
  https://www.thegrocer.co.uk/marketing/co-op-drops-original-easter-ad-campaign-to-support-fareshare/603858.article?utm_source=Daily%20News%20(The%20Grocer)&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=2020-04-09&c=

2.10 Government Trends

Many food banking organizations are being asked to prepare and liaise with national governments – we recommend if you have not yet made contact with your local/regional/national government that you consider doing so soon so you can liaise on relief efforts.

In some countries, food banks are being actively assisted by government agencies who view food bank operations as critical to providing emergency services during the health crisis. In other instances, governments that have issued “shelter in place” orders or closures, exempt food banks from the closure mandate, recognizing the important social protection and relief role food banks provide in the
• In the US, the Governor of California, a state severely affected by the virus, has directed the National Guard to assist food bank operations, “It’s in these times of crisis that Californians are at their best, coming to the aid of those in their community who are most in need. Food banks provide a critical lifeline for families, and are needed now more than ever,” Newsom said. The Los Angeles Times piece on the story is available here: https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-03-20/california-national-guard-deployed-to-food-banks-during-coronavirus.

• And in Illinois, USA the Governor has issued a stay at home order and closure of non-essential businesses and services for the entire state, including Chicago. Food banks as providers of essential human services and assistance, are exempt from the closure order.

• It is recommended that food banks approach their government to request written authorization to continue operations during lockdowns / quarantines. The national network of food banks in Argentina was successful in doing this:
  o Supporting Info: The documents from Argentina:
    ▪ Argentina_1. Nota a autoridades.pdf
    ▪ Argentina_2. Autorizacion RedBdA.pdf
    ▪ Argentina_3. Autorizacion circulacion.pdf

• Foodbank Australia now sits on the following committees and working groups supporting the Federal Government’s COVID19 response:
  o Trusted Information Sharing Network (TISN) Food and Grocery Sector Group (FGSG)
  o Department of Home Affairs Supermarket Taskforce
  o Social Services Minister’s Emergency Relief, Food Relief and Financial Counselling Forum
  o Department of Home Affairs All Hazards Industry Group

• One European country entered into a strategic partnership agreement with the Ministry of Social Affairs prior to the crisis, meaning the food bank will deliver extra food support if asked and, in return, the Ministry will also support the food bank with food, money and supplies.

• Local government partnership can also provide additional support in return for delivering food to homes when people are in in isolation.

• In an Italian region, Emilia Romagna, the regional authority asked the local food bank to draft the guidelines for all the relief organizations. Authorities are recognizing the food bank as a reliable entity amongst the various non-profit organizations working on relief.

• Costa Rica is organizing the delivery of kits, and the government is asking the food bank to help them to deliver food to families that the government has identified as necessary to serve, in exchange for government volunteering.

2.11 Government Relief for Charities - Not Just Business
Given the economic impacts of COVID-19, many governments are discussing bail-out/relief packages generally targeted towards consumers and small business. Engage with government funding decision makers to encourage support for non-profit human services.

• Feeding Hong Kong flagged this very good article in the South China Morning Post about Hong Kong charities that are requesting that government relief include support for charities, not just businesses. Read here: https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/society/article/3074081/coronavirus-battered-ngos-say-hong-kongs-charity-sector

• GFN, along with our partner food bank organizations will issue a statement urging greater
national government and multi-lateral institutional support for the emergency assistance and humanitarian relief work of food banks. This will be shared in an upcoming COVID-19 update.

2. 12 Information Challenges
As confusion about the virus continues around the world (i.e. fears that COVID-19 spreads via food or food packaging/handling) food banks are encouraged to make government statements and FAQs available on their websites.

- Foodbank Australia asked their federal government to issue a fact-based statement, now available on the FSANZ website (Food Standards - Australia and New Zealand) regarding this issue (available here: https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/consumer/safety/Pages/NOVEL-CORONAVIRUS-AND-FOOD-SAFETY.aspx).

Many food banks in the GFN Network operate programs for school-age children and collaborate with schools in meal programs. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), with UNICEF, and WHO have issued guidance to protect children and ensure safe school operations:

- GFN will provide additional guidance on providing food assistance to school-age children and their families during periods of school closure. The guidance will be taken from different methods being deployed, innovations and best practices from food banks around the world and different circumstances. Look for this in an upcoming COVID-19 email update.
- WFP, FAO and Unicef have developed a guide for mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on food and nutrition of schoolchildren.
  - Supporting Info: WFP_Mitigating the Effects of COVID19 on Nutrition of Schoolchildren.pdf
- WFP also published a paper with brief examples of how some National Governments are supporting in feeding school age children during the COVID-19 crisis:
  - Supporting Info: WFP_School Feeding_Government Support_EN.pdf (English & Portuguese)
APPENDIX 1 – INDEX OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

All the documents listed below can be accessed and downloaded at this link:

https://foodbanking.box.com/s/vfy77wivpxmd3o03rfvral94w4l6l03

- **Argentina_1. Nota a autoridades.pdf:**
  - Formal latter from the food banks to the government requesting authorization for food banks to continue operating during lockdown.

- **Argentina_2. Autorizacion RedBdA.pdf:**
  - Formal letter from the government authorizing food banks to stay in operation.

- **Argentina_3. Autorizacion circulacion.pdf:**
  - Documentation given to food bank staff and drivers showing authorization to operate.

- **Australia - DRAFT - Coronavirus Procedure - V1_March 2020.pdf:**
  - Procedure manual to two Australian food banks, dated 4th March.

- **Australia_Briefing Note and Update 23 March 2020.pdf:**
  - Briefing note to stakeholders of Foodbank Australia, dated 23rd March.

- **Australia_Press Release on Increased Retailer Donations.pdf:**
  - Press release detailing partnership between Foodbank and a major retailer to provide a specified amount of product to Foodbank’s COVID-19 relief efforts.

- **Colombia_Appeal for Funds and Food.jpg:**
  - Poster from SACIAR food bank appealing for funds and food.

  - Safety protocols implemented by The Egyptian Food Bank (English & Spanish).

- **FEBA_Joint Statement of Food Banks.pdf:**
  - Letter from FEBA & their member food banks urging Governments, corporations and European Institutions to support food banks in their COVID-19 response efforts.

- **Food Industry Asia_Impact on Food Industry_20 March.pdf:**
  - Industry analysis on how COVID-19 is affecting food availability in select Asian countries.

  - In depth document developed by the Global Cold Chain Alliance (GCCA) to help food distributors prepare and maintain operations during COVID-19 (English & Spanish).

- **GCCA_Food-Supply Chain-EmployeeIDTemplate (South Africa).docx:**
  - An unofficial template that food banks can issue to staff stating that they are exempted by Government to continue working (in case of being questioned by authorities).

- **GCCA_What to do if an employee has COVID-19_EN.pdf & GCCA_What to do if an employee has COVID-19_ESP.pdf:**
  - A guide by GCCA with advice by the US Center for Disease Control on the steps to take in the event that one of your staff or volunteers gets COVID-19 (English & Spanish).

- **GFN Procurement in Disaster_EN.pdf & GFN Procurement in Disaster_ESP.pdf:**
  - Guidelines to assist food banks with purchasing food at a fair price. Developed by GFN
(English & Spanish).

- **GFN_COVID19_LATAM UPDATE_MARCH 18 2020.mp4**:
  - Recording of a webinar the GFN Latin America team held discussing responses to COVID-19.

- **GFN_COVID-19-Food-Safety-Letter_EN_ESP.pdf**:
  - Letter from academic experts to GFN stating that food from affected areas does not transmit COVID-19 (English & Spanish).

- **Hong Kong_Appeal for Essential Items.pdf**:
  - Example of a clean and simple e-mail appeal for specific essential products.

- **Indonesia_Ingredients in Family Kits.pdf**:
  - List of items included in kits for families.

- **USA_CDC Modified Checklist for Pandemic Planning.pdf**:
  - A planning template developed by the US Center for Disease Control.

- **USA_Feeding America - Human Resources Update.pdf**:
  - Update to Feeding America employees regarding new policies and guidance related to COVID-19, dated 5th March.

- **USA_Feeding America - Response Summary - 9 March 2020.pdf**:
  - Description of Feeding America response in the early days of COVID-19 hitting the US, dated 9th March.

- **WFP_Mitigating the Effects of COVID19 on Nutrition of Schoolchildren.pdf**
  - Guidance from WFP, FAO and Unicef on mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on food and nutrition of schoolchildren.

- **WFP_School Feeding_Government Support_EN.pdf**
  - Paper by WFP with brief examples of how National Governments are supporting school feeding programs during the COVID-19 crisis.

- **WHO_Food Safety Guide_EN.pdf**:
APPENDIX 2 – SAFE FOOD HANDLING

COVID-19 Response and Preparedness
Safe Food Handling

In this time of increased personal risk due to the spread of COVID-19, it is essential that the food bank system – from the global level to the local level – enforce strict compliance with a core set of operating standards designed to protect staff and the recipients of the products provided by the food banks. Safe food handling is the most critical concept in the work of food banks and their beneficiary institutions on an ongoing basis. Although food safety laws and regulations vary from country to country, the science behind food safety is universal, and therefore, the core components of the food safety sphere are essentially the same.

It is critical that food banks work closely with local monitoring agents and health inspectors to ensure that they are fulfilling the guidelines, regulations and legislation as they apply to their facility and programs. In all situations, the policy and direction given to local food banks by their health inspectors supersedes guidelines shared by GFN.

Currently, the transmission of COVID-19 through food, food packages, or even food handlers has not been identified as a risk factor for this illness (link to COVID-19 letter) therefore food pick up and distribution should not be interrupted. However, extra care should be taken by food banks and charity partners in handling food to minimize all person to person contact.

Suggestions from GFN network members include:

- Ensure sorting of product is supervised by staff trained in social distancing protocol.
- All personnel should be instructed to wear gloves when handling product; Hand hygiene should be performed before putting on and after removing gloves using alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60 to 95% alcohol or soap and water. Gloves to be removed carefully and disposed of when food handling has been completed.
- Based on limited public availability of masks, to protect staff when potentially serving infected populations, client-facing personnel are encouraged to wear mask, if available, and to dispose of them properly after each use.
- Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks) can be wiped down by employees before each use.
- Instruct drivers and all staff/volunteers to maintain recommended distance of 2 meters (6 feet) from donor/charity partner staff.
- Avoid hand to hand passing of product with the first person setting the product down on a table or other surface for the second person to pick up.
- Establish pick up appointment times for charity partners, allowing for extra time for selection and loading of product before the next appointment.
- Require partners to pre-order: on-line or phone.
- Consider virtual volunteers to take phone orders, allowing on-site staff to do physical work.
- Limit charity partners to 2 people in the food bank.
- Utilize multi-language signage as appropriate to minimize staff interactions if possible.
- Increase delivery where possible; Consider drive thru beneficiary pick up.
Recommendations from US government agencies for Social Services provider who have Face-to-Face visits with clients (meaning for food banks: beneficiaries, charity partners, donors):

- Postpone non-essential visits with any client that has a cough or fever until they are well.
- Brief interactions, like checking someone in for an appointment, pose a very low risk of disease spread.
- If in-person visit is essential and the client is well, and wash hands regularly.
- If in-person interaction is essential and the client is coughing:
  - The client should wear a mask and you should maintain a distance of 6 feet
  - Limit your time together in an enclosed space
- Consider interacting outdoors, if appropriate

If in-person interaction is essential and you must be within 6 feet (such as law enforcement), check with your manager or safety officer for guidance.

Continue to monitor local regulations that impact food distribution and follow recommendations the World Health Organization (WHO) and community health departments.

- Information on how to protect yourself here.
- Information on how to prepare your workplace here, including draft signage.