

COVID-19 Food Resources and Policy Updates

May 20, 2020



Anti-Hunger Subcommittee

Phillyfpac.org, fpac@phila.gov, [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#): @PhillyFPAC

FPAC's Mission and Vision

Calvin Okunoye, FPAC Co-Chair

The [Philadelphia Food Policy Advisory Council](#) connects Philadelphians and our local government to create a more just food system—where all people have the power to access, own and control our food, land and labor.

FPAC has 31 appointed members and 6 subcommittees. All meetings are open to the public. City employees serve as “ex-officio” members.

Subcommittees:

- [Anti-Hunger](#)
- [Food & Health](#)
- [Good Food Procurement](#)
- [Urban Agriculture](#)
- [Workforce & Economic Development](#)
- [Zero Waste](#)



How we started

Amanda Wagner, FPAC Co-Chair

Food Policy Councils

- Bridge across the food system - forum for coordinated action
- Some are situated within government; some are in the community; some are hybrid

Philadelphia's Journey

- 2008 Philadelphia Food Charter Established
- 2011 First Group of Members “seated”
- Sits in the Office of Sustainability
- Advises City Government



FPAC members Amy Laura Cahn and Kirtrina Baxter testify at the September 2016 Urban Agriculture Hearing.

Anti-Hunger Subcommittee

Amy Goldstein, Subcommittee Co-chair

The Anti-Hunger Subcommittee connects advocates to address food insecurity by educating the Philadelphia community, improving access to culturally appropriate, healthy, and affordable food, and developing policy recommendations that support systemic change.

Get Involved

1. Join [FPAC's mailing list](#)

2. Join us on social media

Find us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) @PhillyFPAC

3. Attend a [general meeting](#) or [executive session](#)

which are not required for FPAC members, provide space for a deeper dive into FPAC-related issues.

4. Join a [subcommittee](#)

5. Submit a [nomination form](#) for FPAC

6. Get in Touch

FPAC welcomes questions, comments, feedback, and suggestions! Send them along to fpac@phila.gov or contact FPAC's Interim Manger, Kristin Schwab: kristin.schwab@phila.gov

Presenters

- FPAC Co-Chair, Calvin Okunoye (Restaurant Opportunities Center of Philadelphia): calvin@rocunited.org
- FPAC Co-Chair, Amanda Wagner (PDPH): amanda.wagner@phila.gov
- Anti-hunger Subcommittee, Amy Goldstein (PCA): amy.goldstein@pcacares.org
- American Heart Association, Samantha Mogil: Samantha.Mogil@heart.org
- Coalition Against Hunger, Kathy Fisher: kfisher@hungercoalition.org
- City of Philadelphia, Joanna Otero-Cruz: Joanna.Otero-Cruz@phila.gov
- Philabundance, Kate Scully: kscully@philabundance.org
- Feast of Justice, Pastor Tricia Neale: director@feastofjustice.org
- Old Pine Community Center, April Thomas-Jones: april@oldpinecommunitycenter.org
- Uplift Solutions: Philly Food Rescue, Shontae Smarr: shontae.smarr@upliftsolutions.org
- Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA), Gail Garrett: Gail.Garrett@pcacares.org
- FPAC Urban Ag. Subcommittee, Bridget Palombo (The Food Trust): bpalombo@thefoodtrust.org

Food Insecurity = a Threat to Health

American Heart Association, Samantha Mogil

IN PHILADELPHIA, 1 IN 4 ARE FOOD INSECURE WITH 475,000 RESIDENTS CURRENTLY RECEIVING SNAP ASSISTANCE.

- Heart disease and stroke continue to be the leading cause of death in Philadelphia.
- The social influencers of health, such as food insecurity, have played a significant role in Philadelphia's health inequities that City Council has worked tirelessly to address.
- At the federal level, the American Heart Association supports increasing the maximum benefit to all households by 15%. In March, we joined 700+ organizations asking Congress to delay proposed and final rules the Administration has issued for SNAP.
- The American Heart Association supports local funding of infrastructure development or technical assistance needs of establishing or expanding SNAP incentive programs.
- As a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives AHA continues to collaborate with local anti-hunger partners, health systems, and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) to address barriers to healthy food access and quality clinical care.

SNAP = Our #1 Line of Defense Against Hunger

Coalition Against Hunger, Kathy Fisher

Those who have lost jobs or income should be encouraged to apply!

Eligibility Rules

- SNAP Household = People who purchase and prepare meals together.
- Spouses who live together and children under age 22 living with their parents **must** apply together.
- Additional eligibility requirements apply to non-citizens and college students.

How to Apply

- Online at www.compass.state.pa.us
- Call BenePhilly at 833-373-5868 for help with SNAP and other benefits.
- Fill out a [SNAP interest form](#) at or call 215-430-0556 and leave a message.
You will receive a return call to complete the application.
- Print an application from the [DHS website](#). Fill it out, drop, mail, or fax it to your local CAO.
- Call 215-560-7226 (Philadelphia) to request a paper application be mailed to you.

Notes on applying:

- If you cannot provide documents (such as pay stubs) due to COVID-19, explain this to DHS and ask for assistance.
- The interview process is **WAIVED**
- If you are approved for unemployment compensation, you must report that income to the CAO.

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	MONTHLY INCOME (Before Taxes)
1	\$1,665
2	\$2,255
3	\$2,844
4	\$3,433
5	\$4,023
Each Add'l Person Add	+\$589

City Food Resources - Vast Partnerships Support Citywide Sites

Joanna Otero-Cruz, Deputy Managing Director for Community Services

Citywide food & meal map: www.phila.gov/food

• **Youth meal sites:**

- 50 Philadelphia School District school sites (Thursdays, 9AM - noon)
- 2 Philadelphia Parks & Recreation center sites (Thursdays, 9AM - noon)
- 6 Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA) community centers (Hours vary)
- 26 Charter school sites (Hours vary)

• **General food distribution sites:**

- 40 sites in neighborhoods across the city (Thursdays, 10AM - noon)
- Any resident can pick up a box of food (one box per household)
- No ID or proof of income is required for distribution

• **Senior meals:**

- **Senior centers offering pick up meals** (website is being updated regularly)
 - 23 senior centers continue to support grab and go meal services.
- Philadelphia Corporation for the Aging (PCA) is offering meal delivery (PCA Helpline: 215-765-9040)

• **Outdoor meal sites:**

- Center City, North Apron of City Hall (Monday - Friday, 11:30AM - 1PM)
- Center City, Thomas Paine Plaza (Thursday - Monday, 4PM - 5:30PM)
- Kensington: PPA Lot at Clearfield & Ruth Streets (Monday - Friday, 1PM - 3PM)
- South Philadelphia: Francis Scott Key Schoolyard at 8th & Wolf Streets (Monday - Friday, 11:30AM - 1PM)

• **People with disabilities:**

- Liberty Resource Center sets up weekly food deliveries for people who that can't leave their home due to a disability
- Call or text (215) 709-9619, email food@libertyresources.org, or complete this form: htbit.ly/2KkuJ8C to be added to the waiting list

Emergency Food: COVID-19 Response

Philabundance, Kate Scully

Agency Network

- Philabundance partner agencies have reported a 30-50% increase in clients.
- Nearly 70 Philabundance agencies initially closed their doors. About 20 have reopened in the past 3 weeks due to availability of PPE and ability to implement no-touch distributions.

Food Sourcing

- Across the country food banks are experiencing difficulty sourcing products due to supply chain issues.
- Food costs for Philabundance have increased 20%-30%.

Distributions

- Providing more food to our current agency network along with cleaning supplies, gloves, and masks when possible.
- Supplying produce to the 40 citywide distribution sites.
- Philabundance Community Kitchen meal production.
- USDA Farmers to Families Food Boxes distributed.



How to Find Emergency Food Resources

Philabundance

For people looking for food resources there are a number of places to find information. Before visiting a pantry or cupboard, we recommend that people call that location to confirm it is open and serving the public.

- Visit the [Community Resource Connect](#) website
- Call 311
- Visit the [Why Hunger website](#) or call 1-800-5HUNGRY



Serving NE Philly – Mayfair (District 6)

Feast of Justice, Pastor Tricia Neale

Two active Programs:

- City Box supersite--high demand daily.
- Ongoing food/supply support: 3 days a week offering dry, perishable (fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy, bakery, grab-and-go), non-food, and baby items.
 - Also offering home delivery to seniors, disabled, or ill guests
 - Logistics made possible by neighborhood Coalition between Councilman Henon, Greater Philadelphia Diaper Bank, Caring for Friends--as well as SHARE, Philabundance, COVID fund
- In total, we provide for over 1500 household visits and distribute 48,000 lb of food a week. Pre-COVID, these numbers were 285 and 10,000, respectively.

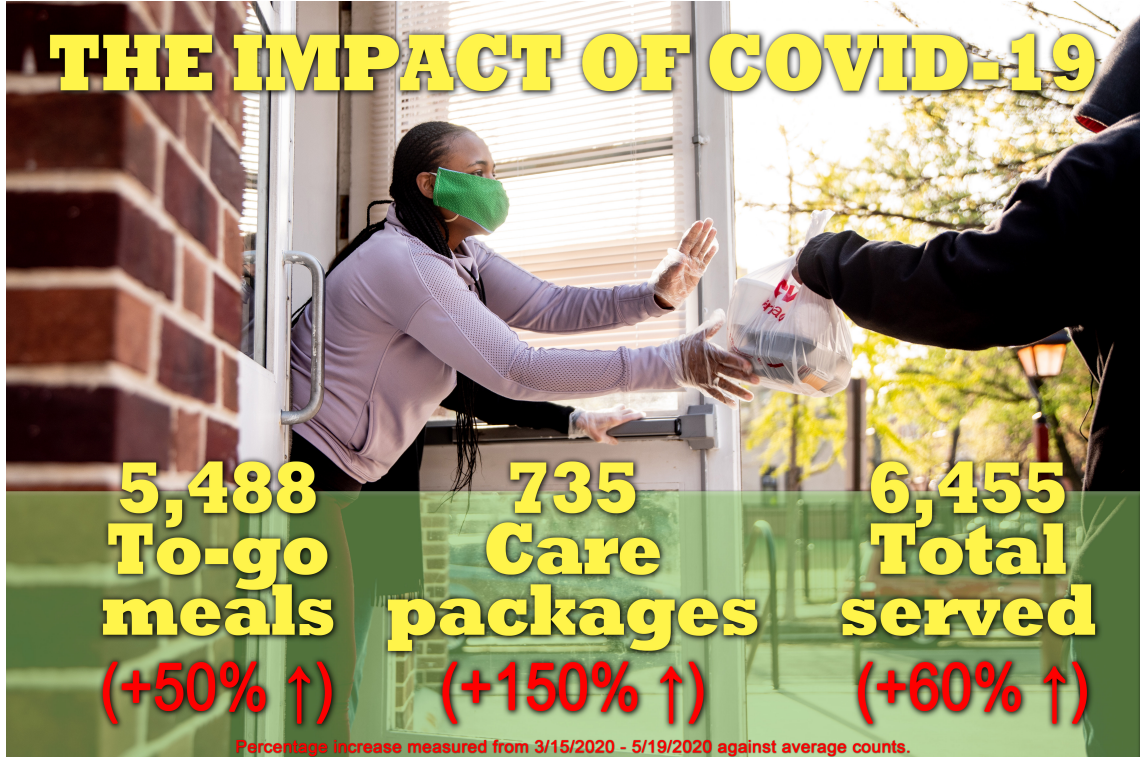
Looking Ahead- Ongoing Needs and Concerns

Feast of Justice

- Short-term relief efforts, while abundant, are still not meeting the need
- Infrastructure support needed:
 - Ongoing access to food and volunteers, so we can continue to focus on being a distribution site.
 - Police/sheriff presence requested to mitigate crowd control--particularly as restrictions are lessened and we transition back into our building while maintaining CDC regulations.
 - Communications support to work with exponential growth of need in immigrant communities.
 - Additional support, including communications, to connect guests to public benefits (SNAP) and other resources.

Old Pine Community Center

April Thomas-Jones, Executive Director



THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

5,488 To-go meals (+50% ↑)	735 Care packages (+150% ↑)	6,455 Total served (+60% ↑)
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Percentage increase measured from 3/15/2020 - 5/19/2020 against average counts.

Uplift Solutions: Philly Food Rescue

Shontae Smarr, Director

We deliver surplus donated food (grocery items, prepared foods, non-perishables, etc.) to community organizations (Non-Profits, housing sites, medical facilities) serving food insecure individuals. Our model mobilizes the community to participate in the solution.

We utilize a volunteer-based transportation network, “Food Rescue Heroes” to rescue and redistribute surplus food donations to these community partners.

What we are doing COVID-19:

- Effective this Thursday, May 21st, we will start doing pop-up drive through food distributions in collaboration with organizations already doing food distribution throughout the different counties to service more of our partners, individual families, etc.
- Working with 2 other organizations (Caring for Friends & KIPP (Norcross) Academy) to service senior citizens & families by delivering meals and boxed groceries to their homes
- Resourcing community partners with PPE, to aid in helping them stay safe while keeping their food distribution operations going during this uncertain time

Accessing Meals for Seniors

Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA), Gail Garrett

Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA)

- Najja Orr, President and CEO
- 28 Senior Community Centers/Meal Sites
 - Grab and Go Meals or coordinate home delivery
 - Easter Outreach, volunteer drivers via forphilly.com
 - Schedule Same day SEPTA CCT Rides
 - Connecting some senior housing units to meals
 - Social Service Calls, Wellness Checks
 - Screening for potential referrals to Older Adult Protective Services
 - Census Completion Reminders: #SeniorsCount
 - Emergency Fund Applications
 - Virtual Programming on social media
- Home Delivered Meals through Care at Home Programs

Other Services for Seniors

Gail Garrett, Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA)

- Care at Home
- Legal Services
 - Community Legal Services
 - Senior Law Center
 - Temple University's Elderly Law Project
- Senior Employment
 - Senior Community Senior Employment Program and JEVS 55+
- APPRISE, Ombudsman and Senior Companion
- Domiciliary Care and Caregiver Support
- Older Adult Protective Services
- Housing Services - Repairs, Modifications, Maintenance
- **PCA Helpline: 215-765-9040**

Philadelphia Farmers Market Update

FPAC Urban Ag. Subcommittee, Bridget Palombo (The Food Trust)

What we know:

- Area farmers markets are forging ahead with summer openings. Market operators/managers report that they are seeing increased demand and shopping for this time of year and that SNAP sales and Food Bucks (nutrition incentives) redemption are soaring compared to previous seasons.
- Markets are adapting to local and state protocols to ensure safety and health of communities, staff and volunteers. Examples: having separate entrances/exits with one-directional flow; physical barriers to separate vendors and customers; pushing pre-order systems with curbside pickup.
- Farmers markets are considered outside of emergency food distribution but are trying to be supportive of those partners; they are involved in policy efforts around SNAP, P-EBT, and universal nutrition incentives.

Gaps/Needs:

- Need to open more markets in high-priority areas (low-income/high rates SNAP receipt, nutrition-related disease, and vulnerability to COVID-19).
- Considering where people have access and if they can afford food at existing markets while being mindful of revenue needs of local food growers/producers/vendors, market operators are concerned about furthering inequities.

Resource Constraints/Opportunities:

- Injection of funds to support more local farmers/farms to afford equipment and transaction costs to accept SNAP and other nutrition benefits.
- Clarity and efficiencies in our local processes to assist farm stands to operate on public owned land.
- Need for more money to be injected into local and state nutrition incentives programming (e.g. Food Bucks and Food Bucks Rx) to ensure people can maximize their cash for fresh, nutritious and safe food. For example, area organizations/legislators submitted a letter to the state asking PA to participate in the Online SNAP waiver. Volunteers, safety equipment (e.g. protective barriers) and PPE equipment for market staff, volunteers and customers.
- Many of our markets are co-located with a local partner to share storage of materials, provide restroom access for vendors/staff, and support advertisement/promotion of the markets. The vast majority of these businesses are closed and so markets are identifying alternative ways to set-up and operate markets to ensure comfort and safety of vendors/farmers and customers.

Online SNAP/Mobile EBT: Safer, contactless checkouts for all

FPAC Urban Ag. Subcommittee

Challenge – What we know:

- As we roll into summer, businesses are seeing an uptick in SNAP/EBT sales. Last weekend, farmers markets reported up to 4x increase in SNAP transactions.
- 10x more consumers are using pre-order and delivery services for their shopping than before. However, many of the 800,000 PA households shopping with SNAP benefits (over 200,000 households in Philadelphia) must still go into stores, putting themselves and their families at risk.

Gaps/Needs:

- Resources – access to technology, grants and TA support to assist more small food businesses with adapting their business operations to provide contactless shopping for SNAP shoppers.
- Responsive and adaptive policies that prioritize safe, contactless food purchasing for all community members regardless of income.

Opportunities:

- Policy advocacy and affinity groups are well-organized and already elevating this issue across the state. (e.g. Farmers Market Coalition, National Grocers Association, Just Harvest, Coalition Against Hunger, Philadelphia Dept. of Commerce and Urban Ag, The Food Trust, and more).
- For example, area organizations/legislators submitted a letter to the state asking PA to participate in the Online SNAP waiver. State representatives and legislature are informed and support addressing this issue, but state funds are slow moving right now.
- There is a grant and guidance for Farmers Markets and On-Farm Markets to receive mobile SNAP/EBT equipment, but nothing yet to support brick-and-mortar businesses with this roll out.
- Philly FPAC is convening City agencies and partners to map out TA and resource needs to enable more of our local, small businesses to **(1) accept SNAP/EBT and food incentives (e.g., Food Bucks), and (2) provide contactless SNAP/EBT purchasing.**

SNAP Policy Changes

Coalition Against Hunger, Kathy Fisher

Work Requirements

- Congress has suspended the 3-month SNAP time limit for Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDS).

Paperwork

- SNAP recertification periods have been pushed back six months. Recipients with a Semi-Annual Report (SAR) or Renewal due will not have to complete the paperwork until the fall.

Changes in income

- Any recipient who has lost income or encountered other changes due to COVID-19 must call the customer service center immediately to report changes to the CAO. **Recipients who are receiving PUC (the extra \$600 in unemployment until July 25) must report this income.**
- The easiest way to do this is call the Philadelphia Customer Service Center: 215-560-7226.

SNAP Emergency Allotments

- Families not receiving the maximum SNAP grant will receive an “emergency allotment” ([EA fact sheet here](#)), added directly to their EBT card in the second half of the month. The funds will bring them up to the maximum grant.
- USDA has instructed states they can continue to issue EAs on a month-to-month basis so long as the federal public health emergency declaration remains in effect.

Pandemic EBT – a new resource for K-12 children

Coalition Against Hunger, Kathy Fisher

What is P-EBT? A new benefit authorized in the Families First Act for school-age children who are missing out on meals provided by the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) as a result of school closures (see: [fact sheets in multiple languages](#)).

Who is eligible? All students eligible for free and reduced-price school meals.

- ALL students in students in School District of Philadelphia Schools (no matter the family's income)
- ALL students in charter and parochial schools that serve free meals to all (like SDP – most Philly schools)
- In schools that do not serve free meals to all, students eligible for free and reduced-price meals through other programs (direct certification) or by application. Those newly eligible can still apply.

How will families get P-EBT?

- Households already getting SNAP or TANF will get the P-EBT funds on their existing EBT card.
- Households that do not get SNAP or TANF will receive a special P-EBT card by mail.
- The single best step families can take now is to make sure their school has their up-to-date mailing address (SDP P-EBT page; for Charters, contact the school staff directly).

How much will they get?

- For the 65 days that school is closed between March 16, 2020- June 12, 2020, households with eligible school aged students (K-12) will receive \$5.70 day or \$370.50 per child to help buy food while school is closed.
- The P-EBT card works like a debit card to purchase food items anywhere EBT benefits are accepted.

When will P-EBT be issued to families? Cards will be mailed in batches. Not everyone will get their P-EBT right away.

- Current EBT card holders will have their benefit deposited in May.
- White P-EBT Cards will be mailed in June.

Questions & Concerns

- Does a senior have to be a participant with a senior center for assistance through CCT?
 - Seniors 65 and older can call the centers to have CCT coordinated for them without a charge. They do not need to be members of the center. For meals seniors need to be 60 or older or married to someone over 60.
- Will the annual senior farmers market food vouchers from Pa. Dept. Agriculture be distributed beginning in June as in the past?
 - PCA will be distributing SFMNP vouchers this summer though under different distribution networks. PCA will be sharing more information about how this will work as soon as we get more guidance from the PA Dept. of Agriculture.
- Information about The Food Trust's open farmers markets, social distancing protocols, Food Bucks (spend \$2/get \$2) and how to become a vendor/community partner can be found here: <http://thefoodtrust.org/farmers-markets>
- "Officials in the state Department of Human Services said Pennsylvania has been accepted into a federal pilot program that allows people enrolled in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, to use their monthly benefits allowance to pay for groceries online. Human Services Secretary Teresa Miller told reporters Tuesday that the state is still finalizing a timeline to roll out the program, after receiving word late Monday that federal regulators accepted their application to join." <https://www.penncapital-star.com/covid-19/snap-recipients-in-pa-will-soon-be-able-to-have-groceries-delivered/>