

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers – Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank & COVID-19

Thursday, March 26, 2020

Q: Are local food pantries continuing to operate during the COVID-19 crisis?

A: Yes, most of our food pantries are still operating. Please reach out to your local food pantry to see if they are currently open and distributing food. To find contact information for your pantry or to find one closest to you, please visit the “Get Help” section of our website, pittsburghfoodbank.org, then click the “Locator” tab.

Q. I just lost my job, do I qualify for assistance?

A: Yes, there are several ways that you can get help. Visit our website at pittsburghfoodbank.org and click on “Get Help”. This page includes information on SNAP (food stamps), our pantry network, grab and go meals for kids and more. If you need help accessing these resources give us a call at 412-460-3663 and we will help you.

Q. How can I apply for SNAP (food stamps)?

A: Our staff can assist you with the application process to receive SNAP benefits. To receive assistance, complete the Referral Form on the Food Bank’s website, pittsburghfoodbank.org by clicking on “Get Help” and scrolling down to the SNAP section. You can also call 1-833-822-SNAP (7627) or text SNAPPA to 555-888. SNAP helps individuals and families make ends meet by providing money to purchase groceries.

Q: Will Produce to People distributions continue during the COVID-19 crisis?

A: No. Produce to People distributions are designed to bring large numbers of people together to receive food, either inside a building or in a small parking lot. All Produce to People locations are now closed for the foreseeable future due to safety restrictions and social distancing recommendations in accordance to CDC guidelines. The sites are also too small to accommodate our new drive-up distribution model. Locations and times for our new drive-up emergency food distributions will be publicized as soon as they become available.

Q: If I do not have a car, can I still get food at a drive-up emergency distribution?

A: Our drive-up distributions will only be serving vehicles. We will not serve people on foot at drive-up emergency distributions, not only to minimize the risk of a car/pedestrian accident, but also to avoid drawing crowds of people to maintain social distancing. If you are unable to drive to one of these special distributions, we encourage you to locate a pantry near you by visiting the “Locator” tab under the “Get Help” page on our website. Please contact the Food Bank directly if you aren’t able to be served by a local food pantry.

Q: Can I pick up food for other families at a drive-up emergency food distribution?

A: We are only able to provide a set amount of food per vehicle at our drive-up emergency distributions regardless of how many families are in the vehicle. This new policy is in place so we are able to serve as many vehicles as possible during a distribution. If you need assistance beyond these drive-up emergency distributions, contact your local food pantry. There is a pantry locator tool on the “Get Help” tab of our website that will help you find a pantry near you.

Q: Can I pick up food for other families at a local pantry?

A: Please contact your local pantry to determine what their policies are on picking up food for multiple households.

Q: Can the Food Bank deliver food to seniors?

A: The Food Bank does not have the ability to directly deliver food to seniors at this time. Individuals should contact their pantry to determine if pantry volunteers and/or coordinators can provide food delivery. Also, if in Allegheny County, please contact the Area Agency on Aging’s DHS SeniorLine at 412-350-5460.

Q: Does the Food Bank have baby wipes and diapers?

A: At this time, the Food Bank does not have these items on our inventory. Individuals can contact the Western PA Diaper Bank (412-373-3074) to find out if they are able to supply these items. However, they are also experiencing high demand due to the COVID-19 crisis. You can also contact your local food pantry to determine if they have any baby items available.

Q: How can my child receive meals while they are out of school?

A: Please visit the COVID-19 link at the top of our website, pittsburghfoodbank.org, and click on “Grab & Go Sites” to find information on whether your child’s school district is offering meal services.

Q: Can I volunteer at the Food Bank?

A: We are currently not accepting volunteers at our main warehouse in Duquesne out of an abundance of caution for staff and volunteers. Volunteers are needed and are being redirected into the community. Please visit the COVID-19 link at the top of our website, pittsburghfoodbank.org, and click on “Volunteer” for more information on upcoming volunteer opportunities at food distributions and other off-site packing sites.

Q: Does the Food Bank need donations at this time?

A: Absolutely. We are purchasing large amounts of shelf-stable food from our wholesalers and making other significant supply and staffing expenditures in our response to the crisis. The best way to donate is to make a financial contribution through our website, pittsburghfoodbank.org, by phone at 412-460-3663 or by mail. For donations via mail, please make checks payable to Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank and mail to 1 North Linden Street, Duquesne, PA 15110.