

COVID-19 Food and Basic Needs Recommendations and Check In

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Introductions

- Hello & Welcome
- Zoom: Name, organization and email address into chat box
- Telephone: ask to introduce self

Background

- Policy Action Group (PAG) first convened in March 2020
- Address the food and basic needs security of residents during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Brought together leaders from the county, cities, state, school districts, and others

Purpose

- Develop a unified food and basic needs supply and distribution system that is prepared to meet community needs, prioritizing our most vulnerable communities

Policy Direction

- Determine the need more specifically and identify the populations and geographic areas most at-risk of food insecurity and lack of access to basic needs, including:
 - 1. Individuals/households in isolation or quarantine
 - 2. Youth
 - 3. Community – focus on individuals/households with limited abilities, financially vulnerable, racial and ethnic communities, and elders

Community Engagement Strategic Priority

- Ramsey County will actively engage in authentic and constructive community dialogue to build a more responsive and effective organization.
- Ramsey County must develop, identify and use a broad range of strategies grounded in authentic and inclusive engagement to ensure all residents and communities have a voice in realizing beneficial outcomes across the county.



Ramsey County Approach

"Continue to serve those communities who are most adversely affected during the pandemic and aligning our resources to protect the health and safety of these members of our community by prioritizing the immediate need while continuing to support and sustain efforts with our partners,....."

County Manager, Ryan O'Connor 2020

- Partner with community to design and implement
- Prioritizing the need of the most impacted residents

Approaches and Recommendations

- Two-way communication with community;
- Racial equity;
- Culturally specific responses;
- Multiple language needs; and
- Access with and without technology and internet

Key Findings

Priorities to Guide Ramsey County's Response

1. Amplify and connect community to school food programs to feed the whole family.
2. Connect community to financial assistance and benefits.
3. Connect community to existing and new food and essential services.
4. Ensure individuals/households who are homebound have access to food and essential services.
5. Amplify food and basic needs distribution sites and alternatives.

Priorities to Guide Ramsey County's Response

6. Provide a centralized location and administrative coordination of community and business efforts, communications, donations, and volunteers.
7. Increase capacity and access to public gardens, including equipment and materials.
8. Partner with community and county partners to meet food needs of individuals who are homeless.
9. Increase transportation options for community
10. Throughout response track usage, anticipate demand, provide continuous improvement recommendations, and performance metrics in partnership with community.

Gaps Identified

- Infrastructure gaps
- Transportation gaps
- Food delivery gaps
- Organization and Communication

Three Focus Areas

- Partner with school and youth food programs to expand and enhance existing services.
- Ensure that residents have access to prepared meals, groceries, and basic needs through partnerships with community providers
- Conduct broad communications and coordination to ensure people know about available food resources and are able to access them

CARES funding

- In April, Ramsey County received \$96M from the federal government through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act
- \$72M has been invested into the Ramsey County Investment and Support Efforts (RISE) which has 3 primary categories
 - Home and Help (housing, food, and financial assistance)
 - Employment support (for job seekers)
 - Small business support (to stay open and adapt)

1. Partner with **school and youth food programs** to expand and enhance existing services.

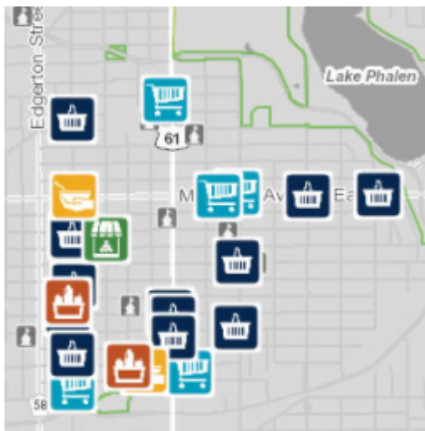
- First round: negotiations underway with three school/youth food programs, with a total of approximately \$1 million.
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2. Ensure that residents have access to **prepared meals, groceries, and basic needs** through partnerships with community providers.

- First round: 19 contracts (signed or in negotiations) with providers for meal delivery and to increase capacity for groceries and basic needs.
- Over 6,500 meals delivered the week of September 12-19.
- Over 22,000 meals delivered since August

3. Conduct broad **communications and coordination** to ensure people know about available food resources and are able to access them

- Created online food resources map that includes food shelves, free meals, “pop-up” food distribution sites, schools, and grocery



Find food and meals near you

Many free meal and food assistance programs are available in Ramsey County.

Use our interactive map to find programs near you, including food shelves, farmers markets, grocery stores, delivery services, and free dining and meal sites.

[View food resource map](#)

Questions

- What was new information for you from this presentation?
- What has changed in your community?
- What impact has the County made during these past months?
- What are relevant limitations that we need to pay attention to?
- What options do you suggest?
- How involved would you like to be?
- How often should we meet?
- What do I do to communicate to others?
- What will mark success or failure?
- Who is missing from today's meeting? How can we contact them?

Thank You

Additional questions or comments?

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