

# FOOD ASSISTANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## JANUARY 29, 2018

### SERVICE COUNTS - TASK FORCE

Committee food banks, food pantries: examining how best to incorporate new programs and standardize practices across programs and counties, to better serve WA State's emergency food system.

### OBJECTIVE

Standardize service counts across WSDA Food Assistance programs in Washington State.

### HISTORY

#### Big Picture

Service counts across the state are not standardized. As data has become increasingly important and scrutinized, this group has expressed interest in fine-tuning how and what is reported in FA state and federal and other programs. The subject of backpacks is meant to jumpstart the conversation of consistency and standardization.

#### Backpacks

Backpack programs administered by food banks and pantries have been a growing segment of the emergency food system in WA State.

Backpacks, like the past incorporation of Supplemental and Special Dietary Needs clients within the EFAP program, required dialogue about how best to measure and report these previously unrecognized/unaccounted (by EFAP) figures.

Backpack clients don't quite fit into the traditional mold of an average food pantry visit/distribution. Backpack and backpack type programs are varied; backpack programs are provided for: homeless, kid(s), family, weekend, and holiday bags are all options throughout the state.

### DEFINITIONS

**Backpack / Weekend Bags for Kids –** Means clients (kids) who receive a food bag for one person, consisting of four meals, comprised of three of the five food groups for at least two days. This is typically given for the weekend and holidays when schools are closed.

### TEFAP BACKPACK REQUIREMENTS

TEFAP commodities may be used in backpack programs for children in accordance with USDA policy FD-041 *Distribution of TEFAP Foods to Children (Revised)* which includes:

- The child's household must complete the eligibility determination process on at least an annual basis.
- Record keeping requirements being met by the contractor and their subcontractors.
- WSDA allows a backpack program to have the (cont.)

### Why We Are Doing This

WSDA would like to work with stakeholders to standardize backpack distributions as best as possible amongst its contractors and across its programs. A standard understanding of what a backpack distribution consists of will impact:

- Food pantry allocations – TEFAP & EFAP (food and funds).
- Open other avenues for agencies to reach clients by standardizing the work they do, bringing backpacks into the “mainstream” of our programs.
- Provide stakeholders, government, agencies with a more complete picture of the work emergency food providers do.
- TEFAP has allowed its food to be used for backpacks for quite some time but doesn’t provide guidance on reporting monthly backpacks when only 1 or 2 items in a bag are commodities.

#### Current Backpack Reporting (optional)

- Backpack reporting is optional.
- 7 contractors are reporting backpacks and backpack clients with consistency (EFAP).
- 48,409 backpacks to date (EFAP).
- No way to determine number of TEFAP backpacks unless subcontractor is a backpack only program.
- TEFAP Policy: *FD-041 Distribution of TEFAP Foods to Children (Revised)*.
- No contractor feedback has been provided to date on the challenges associated with tracking and reporting data.

#### Discussion Points

- Minimum requirements for backpack? Does the current definition work? (Note: SFY17 one county in WA State provided 6.2 lbs per client, per visit)
- Other definitions needed?
- For reporting and allocation purposes, what constitutes a backpack program? Family Bags, Homeless bags, crockpot programs, summer feeding program bags should they be included?
- Should some of the other programs be included in Special Dietary Needs or Supplemental?
- BackPack Program has been trademarked, should we be calling our programs BackPack Programs? Other names around the state: FORKids, Bite2Go, etc.

program staff maintain a list of households receiving backpacks at each distribution rather than having the household sign for each backpack.

NOTES:

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### FEEDING AMERICA

#### Standards

A Backpack Program must meet the following standards, and Feeding America will provide Participants with guidelines for meeting the following standards:

1. Approved agency in good standing or program or project of a Feeding America Participant that comply with all applicable Federal and local statutes, ordinances and regulations.
2. Healthy, nutritious food must be distributed to children free of charge.
3. Backpacks must be provided a minimum of once a month during the school year.
4. Staff and volunteers with direct repetitive contact with children must pass National Background Search.

#### Evaluation | Reporting

BackPack Programs shall gather the following data monthly:

- Number of carriers (e.g., backpacks) distributed per month
- Number of times carriers are distributed per month
- Number of distribution sites open
- Number of distribution inactive or closed
- Number of children served through the program



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### OTHER

(Other things about the program?)

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## ST. LEO FOOD CONNECTION

### Standards

A Backpack Program operator must meet the following standards to operate the program:

- Weekly Delivery
- Two volunteer opportunities available with the Backpack Program – Packing Food or Delivering Backpacks
- All drivers must pass a background check prior to their first delivery, use personal vehicle, valid driver's license, ability to lift 40 lbs. and commit to a weekly delivery schedule

### Evaluation | Reporting

Backpack volunteers/program staff shall gather the following data monthly:

- Backpack/bag – 1 individuals/clients all backpacks includes 2 Breakfasts, 2 Lunches, 2 Dinners, and snacks per person
- Family-sized backpack/bag – scaled up version of individual backpack
- New – Once per year at beginning of school year.
- Returning – Each successive month a client and their bag is considered returning.



ST. LEO  
**FOOD  
CONNECTION**

## OTHER

Students involved in our program are selected by counselors at their school and receive a bag of food each Friday to carry them through the weekend. Each "Backpack" includes 2 Breakfasts, 2 Lunches, 2 Dinners, and snacks. The food is aimed at the student directly, but we often include one family-sized dinner option meant to be eaten by the student and their family. We are currently serving nearly 850 students each week in over 30 schools!

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## THURSTON COUNTY FOOD BANK

### Standards

FORKids Backpack Program summary:

- Program is operated by TCFB
- School districts target children who rely on Free and reduced lunch. Child remains anonymous to TCFB.
- Backpack "orders" including any additional/new are submitted by 9AM Tuesday weekly
- Two volunteer opportunities available with the Backpack Program – Packing Food or Delivering Backpacks
- All deliveries are made by Thursday for distribution on Friday
- **1-Milk, 1- Protein** (soup, ravioli, tuna), **2- noodle product** (ramen, cup of soup, mac and cheese), **1- single serving cold cereal, 1- oatmeal packet, 2-fruit products** (fruit cup, dry fruit, fruit juice), **1 granola bar and 1 treat** (chips, crackers, fruit snack)
- Each bag weighs about 2.5 - 3 pounds. And costs about \$6.32 (all bags are peanut free)

### Evaluation | Reporting

Backpack volunteers/program staff shall gather the following data monthly:

- Client remains anonymous
- Gender and grade level are reported weekly
- New and Returning Clients are reported weekly



**FORKids Program**

## OTHER

TCFB build 8 pallets of backpacks each week taking 3-4 groups of volunteers (15ppl average). Staff is made aware of any scheduling peculiarities in a given week and communicate those to the volunteer drivers.