



Food for Thought

Washington Food Coalition newsletter / Winter 2020

No one in Washington State should go hungry

WaFoodCoalition.org

Message from the Executive Director

Happy Almost Spring! I hope you had a smooth holiday season and found a few days to relax and enjoy with family and friends. The sun is shining on the west side of the mountains today but I'm sure the clouds and rain are not far behind. Counting the days until we see sun every day!

Thanks to all of you who have renewed your 2020 membership to the Washington Food Coalition. Don't worry there's still time to renew! Please go to www.foodcoalition.org for a renewal application.

There is a lot going on in Olympia right now that affects the families we serve. Please see the Anti-Hunger and Nutrition Coalition's legislative agenda here. One of the priorities, article on page 4, the Capacity and Infrastructure Grants for Food Banks and Meal Programs, will fund a three-tier rebate program to assist programs with needed equipment to handle the growing amount of fresh and frozen food.

Look for a couple new projects coming from the WFC this spring, including a survey that will identify the regional capacity and needs of food pantries and a new training session. If you have ideas for the training, please let me know.

Thank you for the continued work you do to assist the hungry in WA State,



Very sincerely,

Trish Twomey

Trish Twomey

trish@wafoodcoalition.org

206-729-0501



SAVE THE DATE
WFC ANNUAL CONFERENCE
SEPTEMBER 30TH - OCTOBER 2ND



THE 28TH ANNUAL LETTER CARRIERS'
STAMP OUT HUNGER® FOOD DRIVE
SATURDAY MAY 9, 2020

www.nalc.org/community-service/food-drive/food-drive-toolkit/promotional-materials

USDA's Trade Mitigation Program What to Expect in 2020

By Katie Rains, Food Assistance Specialist & Focus on Food Project Coordinator

HISTORY:

The Trade Mitigation Program (TMP) was announced by USDA in August 2018 to assist agricultural producers impacted by foreign tariffs. TMP does this by purchasing affected items and distributing them to a number of food distribution programs run by the USDA, like The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and Child Nutrition Programs.

Starting in December 2018, WSDA began coordinating the distribution of TMP foods through our existing network of TEFAP providers. TMP brings seldom seen items like frozen pork, frozen beef, fresh fruit, and fresh milk to food pantries in Washington. In calendar year 2019 TMP provided an additional 19,937,450 pounds of food worth \$18,390,613 to Washington food pantries. Now in its second year, TMP will run at least through June 2020 but may continue through the rest of 2020 or beyond.

FUNDING:

For January through June the TMP funding will continue to work in the same way it has been working and you should see a similar amount of TMP funding as you have seen in the past 3 quarters of TMP. In all but the first quarter of TMP (January 2019 through March 2019 - Phase 1) Washington received \$2,000 dollars per TMP truck ordered. We have been ordering around 170 trucks per quarter.

The exception to this is if you have been receiving direct shipments of TMP milk and no other direct TMP loads. The fresh milk is no longer TMP and is instead TEFAP bonus, thus these loads no longer come with TMP funds attached.

DISTRIBUTION:

Much of the trade food is fresh and frozen items which can put additional strain on our distribution systems. We must continue to move all TEFAP and TMP items as quickly as we can.

Here are a few things you can do to increase your distributions of TEFAP and TMP food:

- Remember, you are **not limited** in the amount of TEFAP or TMP product you can distribute to clients. If you have an abundance of an item feel free to give as much to households as they are willing to take.
- If it's realistic to **expand your hours** of distribution of TEFAP, please do so. For food pantries only open once a month, opening extra days will allow clients who normally couldn't make it to the normal distribution an opportunity to receive food.
- If your clients are currently only allowed to receive TEFAP foods once a month, consider **allowing additional visits**.
- Gather recipes for your food pantries** that are easy for clients to replicate. This can help make those hard to move items more appealing. WSDA has a wealth of resources available on our website at: agr.wa.gov/services/food-access/hunger-relief-resources/recipes-and-nutrition-resources
- Consider **sampling some of the recipes** you gathered, it may be easier to distribute hard to move items when clients know they can make a tasty meal with it.

- If you don't already **serve meal programs** in your area consider reaching out to them.
- Meal programs are encouraged to **provide additional meals** to their clients.
- Harvest Against Hunger, Northwest Harvest, and other funding partners are administering a **Hunger Relief Refrigerator grant initiative**. The initiative provides rebates of up to \$500.00 toward the purchase of refrigerated and/or frozen storage units for hunger relief programs across Washington. You can find additional information on this program at the following link <https://www.harvestagainsthunger.org/refrigerated-capacity-grants/>

Before you spend your own dollars on food, it's important to look at what foods are being order by TEFAP, TMP, NWH, FLL, and Second Harvest. This will ensure that you don't purchase items that you are ready going to get from a one of the above sources.

INVENTORY:

Please ensure that the food you are receiving is properly received and tracked.

CONTRACTORS:

- Receive direct shipments in WBSCM within 48 hours.
- Pallets should be clearly labeled with TEFAP and/or TMP and date received.
- TEFAP and TMP are recorded on separate inventories.
- You can find out what program each item belongs to via the TEFAP and TMP Direct Shipment Workbook or your Indirect Shipment Workbook if the item came from NWH, FLL or 2H. In addition your BOL from NWH, FLL or 2H should also indicate the program each it belongs to.
- BOL's issued to subcontractors should indicate what program each items belongs to.

SUBCONTRACTORS:

- You should be able to identify what program an item belongs to.
- The TEFAP Subcontractor inventory Report has column to indicate if the item being reported is TMP.
- You should be able to find the program each item belongs to on the BOL you received from your contractor.

WSDA HOSTS TRAINING WEBINARS VIA GOTO MEETING:

They cover the following items:

- Using TEFAP and TMP inventory forms for both contractor and subcontractors.
- Using CSFP inventory forms for both contractors and subcontractors
- WBSCM receiving for TEFAP and CSFP contractors.
- Adding new people to your origination in WBSCM.

If you are interested any of the above training please contact James Scovel at Jscovel@agr.wa.gov

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USDA's Trade Mitigation Program What to Expect in 2020 (continued from page2)

By Katie Rains, Food Assistance Specialist & Focus on Food Project Coordinator

ADDITIONAL:

Please note that some items have changed over time from TMP to TEFAP including January 2020 grapes and the fresh milk for January, February, and March. These items are now TEFAP Bonus and not TMP.

ONE MORE OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT:

WSDA's Food Assistance team is working alongside the Department of Ecology, Department of Health and Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to fulfill the mandate of HB1114 and write a statewide plan that will cut the amount of food tossed in the landfill in half by 2030. We are eager to gather lessons learned, recommendations and perspective from our hunger relief partners across the state as we work to draft this plan by June. The next **Hunger Relief** subject matter expert meeting is **Tuesday March 24th**. Please contact Katie at krains@agr.wa.gov to learn more and get involved!

COMPLETE EATS



Announcing important changes to Complete Eats Fruit and Vegetable Coupons at Safeway stores. Beginning February 1, 2020:

- The coupon will print on the bottom of the receipt after a qualifying fruit and vegetable purchase, not as a separate coupon;
- The coupon will be \$3 (not \$5) in most stores*.

Complete Eats is still a very helpful way for clients who use the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to stretch their food budget to buy more fruits and vegetables. In 2019, Complete Eats customers spent 10% more on fruits and vegetables compared to 2018. Complete Eats coupons are available at any Safeway location in Washington.

Why the change to a coupon on the bottom of the receipt? Safeway recently updated their point-of-sale software to print coupons on the bottom of their receipts (instead of relying on a third party for printing coupons). With this change, we expect the program to operate better for SNAP shoppers.

Why the change to \$3? Funding for the program is limited and changing to a \$3 coupon (from the current \$5) allows Department of Health and Safeway to keep the program running longer.

*Safeway stores in Seattle will still offer the \$5 coupon to SNAP shoppers.

Complete Eats in Seattle is partially funded by the City of Seattle's Sweetened Beverage Tax.

Complete Eats is part of Washington State's Fruit and Vegetable Incentive Program. Learn more at www.doh.wa.gov/CompleteEats or email FINI@doh.wa.gov.

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Retail Food Rule Revision: Top 10 Potential Changes to WAC 246-215

By: Susan Shelton Food Safety Program Public Health Advisor

Environmental Public Health Washington State Department of Health



4. CLEAN UP OF VOMITING AND DIARRHEAL EVENTS

Under the new rule, establishments will need to have a written plan that employees can follow to clean up vomit and diarrheal events. Improperly cleaning up vomit in food facilities has caused food-borne illness outbreaks in Washington and nationally, even though the source of illness may not have originally been the restaurant's food or employee. Guidance materials are being developed to help businesses prepare for proper clean up and disinfection in a variety of environments (such as carpet and grass), around sensitive groups (such as schools and nursing homes), and using effective methods (such as absorbent material and disinfection standards).

5. REFILLING REUSABLE CONSUMER-OWNED CONTAINERS

This section has received the most public input during the rule revision process. The current food safety rule does not allow customers to refill their personal containers with food or beverages, except for water. If adopted and the food establishment participates under an approved plan, the new rule will allow customers to fill their own personal container with bulk foods, raw produce, and certain other foods. Guidance materials are being developed to help food establishments develop a written plan to ensure a contamination-free and safe process for customers. Now let's look at five changes specific to organizations that distribute food to the needy.

6. CLARIFICATION OF ANNUAL REPORTING REQUIRED FOR DONATED FOOD DISTRIBUTING ORGANIZATIONS

The current rule exempts a donated food distributing organization from needing to have a food service permit, but doesn't exempt the operation from all food safety requirements. One of the requirements is to report the food service activities to the local health department. The new rule details the expectations for reporting to the health department, such as submitting the IRS determination letter of non-profit status and updates on changes to the food service practices.

7. ADDITIONS AND SUBTRACTIONS TO FOODS ALLOWED FOR DONATION

The state is looking to increase awareness of food that can be safely donated to help reduce food insecurity as well as food waste. The new rule includes language to allow some perishable packaged foods, such as cheese sticks or cartons of milk, that have been provided at a school lunch meal or other establishment to be re-served to another person if the food is still sealed and returned to refrigeration immediately. In addition, the list of acceptable foods is expanded to highlight more opportunities. Two food items were specifically removed from the list of acceptable foods for donation: custom-slaughtered farm animals and raw (unpasteurized) milk. The retail food rule related to custom slaughter was modified because state law does not allow domesticated animals, such as cows, goats, and pigs, to be slaughtered in a non-USDA facility unless it's for the owner of the living animal. The provision prohibiting raw milk donation was added based on stakeholder comment to help reduce the potential risk of raw milk through distribution.

8. TRANSPORTING FOOD FOR DONATION

Several changes related to transportation were made after significant input from stakeholders, particularly those that work in donated food distribution. The draft rule explicitly includes language to transport donated food at proper temperatures in clean containers that protect the food from contamination. While receiving safe food is required for all food establishments in other sections of the food rule, the changes in the donated food section of the rule are intended to help gather the general requirements for donated food in one section.

9. LABELING PACKAGED FOODS

Current state law requires that all packaged foods destined for donation must have complete label information on the package, on the master carton, or on another notice available for review for the customer. The draft rule clarified the state rule in writing. This clarification, specifically regarding distributor and allergen labeling, identified considerable concerns from donated food groups even though it technically didn't add to the current state law requirements.

10. RECORD KEEPING

The new rule will increase the holding time for donated food records from thirty to ninety days. This increased time will help ensure records are available for regulatory partners to complete food-borne illness or recalled product investigations properly.

We've covered ten of the potential changes to the rule and are eager to hear from you. Remember: We're all stakeholders in food safety—whether it's as a customer, a worker, a patient, a parent, or a volunteer—and now is the time to help us ensure the retail food rule works for Washington state. Please reach out if you'd like more information or if you have comments or suggestions.



Washington's food service rule that restaurants, schools, grocery stores, hospitals, and donated food organizations are required to follow is being revised. The rule is being changed to address current food safety science, adopt new requirements in the FDA Food Code, and incorporate lessons learned from recent food-borne outbreaks. Stakeholders, including several donated food distributing food partners, also provided extensive comment to help change the rule. The revision process is expected to be completed by the end of this year, but it's not too late to have your voice heard!

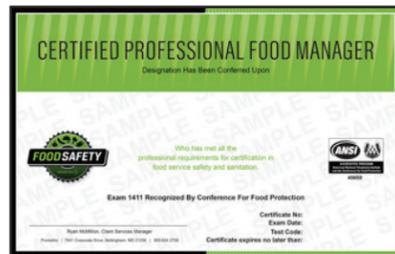
In this newsletter, we've reached out to Susan Shelton with the Department of Health Food Safety program to help select 5 items in the draft rule likely to affect all food establishments and 5 items that will particularly affect donated food groups. You'll likely see some of the changes later as you go out to eat; but, like much of the work you do to protect food safety, most of the changes will be invisible to consumers.

There are actually over one hundred changes expected for the food service rule. If you have questions or want to know more about the potential changes we didn't cover here, email food.safety@doh.wa.gov to directly ask Susan your questions, to sign up to receive email updates on the rule revision, or to request additional education.

One last thing: The following items are currently planned for a public hearing with the state board of health on **August 12, 2020**. If they are accepted, the effective date of the new rule is expected for next winter (**likely January or February 2021**). Let's get started on our Top 10!

1. CERTIFIED FOOD PROTECTION MANAGER (CFPM)

One of the biggest changes that will likely affect all food establishments is the requirement to have a trained food safety manager. At least one employee will need to have manager certification from one of five national test providers. The CFPM is a manager-level class and is not the same as Washington's food worker card. The employee with the CFPM certificate does not need to be in the facility at all times, but must ensure all persons in charge are properly trained to understand and apply food safety knowledge and oversight related to the food operation. This provision is planned to have a one year delay in implementation to allow for businesses to identify a CFPM. (You may search online for "ANSI-CFP Accreditation" to see the list of CFPM testing providers.)



2. EMPLOYEE HEALTH

One of the biggest sources of illness linked to food establishments is workers handling food when they are sick. The new rule will add two more diagnosed illnesses (norovirus and all types of Salmonella) that will prevent an employee from working in a food establishment until they are cleared by the health department. In addition, food establishments will be required to train workers on food-borne illness symptoms and reporting.

3. DATE MARKING FOR 7-DAY REFRIGERATED SHELF-LIFE

The new rule will add a requirement to mark use-by dates on ready-to-eat, refrigerated, perishable foods that are prepared in-house or are in opened packages. This requirement is designed to help reduce illnesses and deaths from Listeria bacteria that can grow in the refrigerator. Affected foods include items such as opened containers of milk, soft cheeses, cut lettuces, cut melons, and potato or pasta salads made in-house. These foods will need to be date-marked and used (or frozen) within 7 days. There are several exempted categories of foods, such as many condiments or hard cheeses, that do not need date marking. Education is planned to help businesses better understand this deadly germ and the foods selected to control it.



CAPACITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS FOR FOOD BANKS AND MEAL PROGRAMS

Christina Wong | Director of Public Policy & Advocacy | Northwest Harvest

This legislative session, Northwest Harvest and Food Lifeline are co-leading the effort to secure \$500,000 in the supplemental budget to create a capacity and infrastructure grants program for our emergency food system.

This request is intended to relieve capacity bottlenecks seen throughout the emergency food system. Does this problem sound familiar to you? A distributor sends you a couple of pallets of beautiful, fresh produce but you don't have the refrigeration capacity needed to keep it fresh until your next service day. You hate to see it go to waste, but you have to turn away the pallets or else you'll have unhappy volunteers sorting through a mess of spoiling food to see what's salvageable.



You're not alone. Increased efforts to secure more fresh produce that is desired and needed by food bank guests combined with an over 400% increase in federal commodities that require refrigeration or freezer space from the Trade Mitigation Program has created an unwanted dilemma for food pantries and meal programs to turn away good food when there isn't the refrigeration or freezer space needed to hold the product for safe distribution. Food distributors then must find the refrigerated trucks, commercial-sized chill and freezer space, and warehouse capacity to hold onto product to minimize waste while distributing it to front-line programs at a more manageable rate.



This budget request, if included in the final supplemental budget, will create a rebate program so that front-line programs can purchase necessary equipment right away to provide immediate relief. In addition to rebates, grants will be given to larger food banks/distributors for bigger projects, including proposals that will increase efficiency and infrastructure through collaboration. In this way, we can not only relieve current capacity needs but proactively build capacity in our system to deal with an anticipated increase in rescued food as Washington implements HB 1114, legislation passed last year that sets food waste reduction goals and recommendations to divert food to our emergency food system.

If included in the final budget, rebate money for equipment purchases will likely be available before the end of the state's fiscal year on June 30 with grants and more rebate money available next fiscal year. To help ensure this request is funded, contact your legislators and the advocacy staff at Northwest Harvest and Food Lifeline with your stories about capacity and infrastructure needs.



ABAWD

What is an ABAWD? An ABAWD is an able-bodied adult age 18 to 49 who is not disabled, pregnant, or living in an assistance unit with minor children. Persons under age 18 and persons 50 and older are not subject to this rule. Currently, at the state level, Sen. Jeannie Darneille submitted a budget request for \$2.5 million in one-time funding to expand our state's Basic Food Employment Training program. The investment increases BFET's capacity to provide services to the 68,000 ABAWDs statewide with services that can qualify them to continue receiving SNAP. Every dollar invested by the state would be matched with federal dollars. For more information on ABAWD's and work exemptions in WA State go to www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/basic-food-work-requirements/abawds-able-bodied-adults-without-dependents



2020 Census

The 2020 Census is important because responses help determine congressional representation for each state, and guide how billions of dollars in public, private, and not-for-profit resources are distributed across the country for the next 10 years. Those funds are used for critical services like emergency response, fire departments, schools, health care, and transportation. Invitations to respond to the 2020 Census arrive in mailboxes March 12th. For tools and materials on the 2020 Census go to <https://www.ofm.wa.gov/washington-data-research/population-demographics/decennial-census/2020-census-everyone-counts/2020-census-resources>



Voter Registration

Did you know you can assist individuals with registering to vote at your program? To order voter registration forms in a variety of languages - <https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/register-mail.aspx> To order materials and swag to register folks to vote go to <https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/civics/> <https://eledataweb.votewa.gov/OVG/MyVoteOLVR>