

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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Foodlink announces additional food distributions to address ‘SNAP Gap’ in Rochester region

Lingering effects of government shutdown impacting emergency food system

ROCHESTER – Foodlink this week announced the times and locations of 14 food distributions next week to assist food-insecure individuals and families who have been impacted by the federal government shutdown.

These special “SNAP Gap” distributions will serve approximately 3,500 households during the week of Feb. 18-23. Thousands of local families received their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits for February weeks early due to the shutdown. As these families await their March benefits, many have had to stretch their food budgets or rely on Foodlink’s network of emergency food providers to help put food on the table. Federal government contractors who lost pay during a 35-day stretch from Dec. 22 to Jan. 25 also continue to feel the effects of the shutdown.

“While it appears we have avoided another government shutdown this week, thousands of our neighbors are still feeling the effects of the first one,” said Foodlink President/CEO Julia Tedesco. “To help those who are facing a real crisis at home, we have collaborated with the United Way and other community partners to coordinate these extra distributions to address the increased need in our region.”

Foodlink strategically chose the week of Feb. 18 to schedule extra distributions for two reasons: (1) SNAP benefits were last distributed Jan. 17-20, meaning that most families would have used their monthly allotment by now; and (2) School vacation week (Feb. 18-22) puts an additional burden on families that now have to provide two additional meals per child each day.

The United Way of Greater Rochester has been a vital partner throughout this process, providing funds, and recruiting additional volunteers for this community-wide effort. Other contributors included the ESL Charitable Foundation, Greater Rochester Health Foundation, Max and Marian Farash Charitable Foundation and the Rochester Area Community Foundation.

“What I’ve seen over the past few weeks is what Greater Rochester does best—neighbors rallying together to help neighbors,” said Jaime Saunders, President & CEO of United Way of Greater Rochester. “Nonprofits, businesses, the City of Rochester and Monroe County came together to lend support. Volunteers have been working tirelessly to sort and bag critical food for families. Our community has truly demonstrated the incredible good we can accomplish when we’re united. Thank you to our partners at Foodlink for leading this charge so that hundreds of people could come together to help thousands more.”

City of Rochester R Centers, as well as the Salvation Army, have agreed to host five Rochester-based distributions throughout the week.

“We appreciate Foodlink, the United Way and others stepping up to help Rochester families who are at risk of going hungry this month,” said Mayor Lovely A. Warren. “With school out of session, I’m glad our City R-Centers can contribute to this effort to ensure children get the nutrition they need.”

Foodlink reached out to its many food vendors and distributors to solicit donations to help fill pre-packed pantry boxes for those in need. Contributing organizations include: LiDestri Foods, M Fellingner, Bonduelle, Perfect Granola, Wegmans Food Markets, Kreher Family Farms, Orbaker's Fruit Farm, Barilla, and the Food Bank of WNY. Additional product through the USDA's TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) was also requested, and Regional Distributors donated heavy-duty bags for packaging.

Foodlink and the United Way recruited additional volunteers to pack thousands of these pantry packs in the week leading up to the distribution. Packs include: Frozen chickens, frozen vegetables, eggs, juice, apples, cereal, juice, pasta, marinara sauce, bread, oatmeal, granola bars, canned peaches, canned beans, split peas, canned vegetables, peanut butter, jelly and shelf-stable milk. The contents of each pack are expected to last approximately 3 days for a family of 4.

Next week’s food distributions will accommodate approximately 250 households each and will operate on a first-come, first served basis. There are no income requirements and no ID required, however name, address and household size will be recorded. Residents must be 18 or older to accept food, and distributions will take place rain or shine.

The public is encouraged to contact 2-1-1 LIFELINE to learn more about food assistance and other resources in their community.

DATE	SITE	ADDRESS	TIME
2/18	David Gantt R Center	700 North St., Rochester	10a-12p
2/19*	South Seneca Food Pantry	7137 Main St., Ovid	3-5p
2/19	Adams R Center	85 Adams St., Rochester	4-6p
2/19*	Bergen First Presbyterian Church	38 South Lake St., Bergen	4:15-6:15p
2/20	Alfred Wellsville Campus	2530 River Road, Wellsville	2-3:30p
2/20*	Community Christian Church	2647 Chili Ave., Rochester	4-5:30p
2/20	Salvation Army	100 West Ave., Rochester	4-6p
2/21	School 17 R Center	158 Orchard St., Rochester	4-6p
2/21*	Rushville United Methodist Church	46 N. Main St., Rushville	5-6:30p
2/21*	Covenant Life	1574 Hennessey Road, Ontario	5-7p
2/22*	Belmont Fire Hall	80 Schuyler St., Belmont	3-5p
2/22	Ryan R Center	530 Webster Ave., Rochester	4-6p
2/22*	Starkey Town Barn	656 Dundee-Glenora Road, Dundee	4-6p
2/23*	Springwater Fire Department	8145 S. Main St., Springwater	10-11:30a

* Denotes a regularly scheduled Mobile Pantry site with additional pantry packs to meet an increased need.

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About Foodlink

Foodlink is a community food resource center and the Feeding America food bank serving Allegany, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, and Yates counties. For 40 years, we have leveraged the power of food to transform lives, end hunger and build healthier communities. Through good stewardship, innovation and collaboration, Foodlink mobilizes a diverse network of partners and stakeholders to eradicate both the symptoms and root causes of hunger.

Our suite of food access programs provides new access points to nutritious and affordable food in underserved communities. Our team of nutrition educators empowers people at risk of diet-related illness with the skills and knowledge to make healthy choices. Our food banking operations distribute millions of pounds of food to a network of hundreds of human service agencies throughout our service area. The Foodlink Community Kitchen prepares and delivers thousands of meals daily for Rochester children, supports our regional agricultural economy by slicing locally grown apples, and hosts a one-of-a-kind career empowerment program to train individuals with barriers to employment for careers in the regional food industry. Learn more about how we are creating healthy futures for every community we serve at www.foodlinkny.org, or follow us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram at @foodlinkny.

For more information, contact:

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