



MEMBER SERVICES MANUAL

REV. 00/00/24

Access the digital manual by visiting FoodlinkNY.org/Members or scan this QR code.



Foodlink
NOURISHING LIVES

WELCOME TO FOODLINK'S NETWORK!

Thank you for your steadfast dedication to our mission of ending hunger and building healthier communities. Throughout the Rochester and Finger Lakes region, more than 150,000 people lack reliable access to enough healthy food. As the regional food bank responsible for convening the emergency food system – which includes hundreds of member nonprofits across a 10-county region – we support a diverse and expansive network to nourish those who need food assistance.

As a new member of our food bank, we aim to provide you with the food and resources you need to serve our neighbors with the compassion and dignity they deserve.

Within this handbook, you will find important information about our collective work, and access to trainings to help you better serve our neighbors. Many of the resources cited in this handbook can also be found on our website at FoodlinkNY.org/members. You can also reach out to any of my colleagues in our Member Services team at memberservices@foodlinkny.org.

Thank you, again, for collaborating with us in addressing poverty and food insecurity in our region. We look forward to building a partnership to better serve our neighbors, under the shared belief that healthy food is a human right.

In gratitude,



Julia Tedesco
President & CEO

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HOW IT ALL BEGAN

'The English Muffin Story'



In 1978, (future Foodlink founder) Tom Ferraro was working for Action for a Better Community when he received funding to launch a Community Food and Nutrition Program. He went on the local news (the Eddie Meath Show) to make a community-wide appeal for food to support the growing number of emergency food pantries in the area. He received a call for a food donation from the warehouse manager at Thomas' English Muffins.

On Dec. 19, 1978, Tom arrived at the warehouse in his wood-paneled station wagon to pick up the muffins, only to discover he'd actually need a much larger vehicle to haul away the generous donation. Since he did not have access to a truck, Tom borrowed an ABC Head Start school bus—and filled it completely!

And thus, the Genesee Valley Regional Food Clearinghouse, which changed its name to Foodlink in 1991, was created with the mission to rescue and redistribute food from manufacturers, retailers, and other donors to human-service organizations.

Foodlink honors Ferraro and that first English Muffin donation each year on December 19, which is affectionately called “Muffin Day.”

OUR MEMBERS

Emergency Providers

PANTRIES, MEAL SITES, SHELTERS AND MULTI-SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Pantry = groceries go home with clients.
- Meal sites = Prepared meals are served.
- Multi-Service = Sites offering meals and a pantry, as well as other services.

Non-Emergency Providers

- Rehabilitation Facilities
- Residential Shelters
- Group Homes

Enabled Member Program

An Enabled Member is a Foodlink member who picks up food donations from retailers and has completed the necessary requirements available only through Marcy McMahon, Foodlink's Food Donor Partnership Specialist. Please contact mmcmahon@foodlinkny.org to learn more about the program.

FOODLINK POLICES AND ORDERING

AGENCY EXPRESS

Foodlink requires any individual who will be ordering or shopping with us to attend our ordering orientation. To register or learn more, contact Member Services via phone or email.

**When someone new will be handling the ordering for your agency, please be sure that they contact Member Services to set up Agency Express Training.

ORDER DEADLINES

All orders must be placed no later than 8:00 AM three business days in advance of your delivery date.

STATISTICS

Food Pantries, Emergency Meal Programs, and School Pantries are required to submit monthly statistics via the online Agency Express portal by the 5th of each month. You can enter your statistics in Agency Express by clicking the Report tab and selecting Survey Management.

ORDER ISSUE POLICY: DAMAGED OR MISSING PRODUCT

If product is damaged or missing from your order, please fill out the [Order Issue Form](#) within two business days of receiving your order. Member Services will work with you to approve your credit.

*Foodlink does not accept product returns. If you have questions about a product ordered, please email Member Services at memberservices@foodlinkny.org or call 585-413-5090

ORDER CANCELLATION POLICY

Orders can be cancelled up to 8:00AM three business days in advance of your delivery date.

DELIVERIES

Foodlink drivers have limited time for each stop. We appreciate your cooperation in ensuring necessary manpower is available to quickly receive, check, and store incoming orders when the driver arrives. In order to decrease delivery time, our drivers will:

- Call ahead to give you time to gather the necessary personnel to assist with unloading and storage.
- Be required to safely unload all products from the truck to a specified drop point at the delivery location.
- Drivers are not responsible for unloading or transporting product into a member facility. Foodlink is held harmless from damage or injury to the building/equipment/personnel if or when a driver consents to transport product upon request into a member' facility.

BILLING AND PAYMENTS

- Monthly Statements are sent at the end of each month.
- Invoices are sent the day before your delivery
- Per Member Agreement: Members will maintain current, full payment of account. Members with overdue payments 90 days past due may be placed "on hold" and not allowed to order. Non-payment may result in termination of membership. Agencies are responsible for payment of all legal and/or collection fees. Only checks and organizational credit cards from an authorized 501(c)(3) non-profit organization are an acceptable form of payment

FOOD SAFETY

FOOD SAFETY TRAININGS

Foodlink requires valid food safety training certification for all members. In order to distribute food, a member must be in compliance at a minimum of the level required for their food program type (see below). The individual(s) meeting the requirement should be in a supervisory role and present for the receiving, storage, and/or distribution of the food at their food program. This individual(s) are responsible for ensuring that other food program workers are appropriately trained on food safety.

Foodlink offers free online Basic Food Safety training. Foodlink encourages members to go beyond the minimum requirements listed below and have multiple food program workers trained in Basic Food Safety. Basic Food Safety certification is valid for five years, but members may be asked to refresh their training more often if food safety citations are found during monitoring visits.

Minimum Training Requirements

Emergency Food Pantries

- Basic Food Safety for Food Pantries: *minimum one person*

Emergency Meal Programs (Soup Kitchens and Emergency Shelters)

- L1 (Food Manager): *minimum one person*
 - Starting January 1, 2025, this is required for all Emergency Meal Programs in Foodlink's service area.
 - Meal programs that were not required to receive this training previously will have up to six months to meet this new requirement.
 - L1 certification is valid for five (5) years.
- L2 (Food Handler): *minimum one person* – Monroe and Orleans Counties only
 - In addition to the above L1 requirement, for sites operating out of a certified kitchen, these county departments of health require at least one individual certified at the L2 (Food Handler) level.
 - L2 certification is valid for three (3) years.

- Note: L1 certification supersedes L2 certification. Therefore, if a food program has two individuals certified at the L1 level, there is no need to receive L2 certification.

** [Click here to access the L1 and L2 training schedule and links to register.](#)

Non-Emergency Storage/Distribution Programs (e.g., snack program)

- Basic Food Safety for Food Pantries: *minimum one person*

Non-Emergency Food Preparation (e.g., group homes)

- Basic Food Safety for Meal Programs: *minimum one person*

** To watch the **Basic Food Safety training for Food Pantries** and to take the required quizzes that follow, [click here.](#)

FOOD RECALLS

- Members are responsible for following recall notifications in order to be aware if product received at your food program may be subject to a recall. [Click here to view the brief online Recalls training and take the accompanying short quiz.](#)

NUTRITION RESOURCES

THE HEALTHY CHOICE: FOODLINK'S NUTRITION RANKING

Foodlink ranks the relative nutritional quality of the foods in our inventory to assist our community partners in choosing items that best meet the needs of their clients. The system, called The Healthy Choice, incorporates evidence-based research about which foods are the most and least supportive and impactful to long-term individual health. The color-coded ranking is as follows:

**CHOOSE
OFTEN**

**CHOOSE
SOMETIMES**

**CHOOSE
RARELY**

OTHER NUTRITION RESOURCES

Food Pantries

- The NYS Department of Health’s Hunger Prevention Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) developed these **Pantry Packing Guidelines** to help food pantries determine equitable and nutritious distribution of food.
- Foodlink requires all food pantries to operate under a model of Client Choice. There are many ways to incorporate choice into your pantry.
- [Client Choice handbook](#)
- 3-day guidelines: [English](#) / [Spanish](#)
- 5-day guidelines: [English](#) / [Spanish](#)
- 7-day guidelines: [English](#) / [Spanish](#)

Meal Programs

- Everything we eat and drink over time matters. Providing healthy choices will help your clients now and in the future.
- [Prepared Meal Guidelines for a HPNAP-Supported Agency](#)

CIVIL RIGHTS TRAINING

- The primary program supervisor is required to take the online Civil Rights training annually.
- All other staff/volunteers with direct client contact should review and sign the Civil Rights Training Handout for Non-supervisory Workers annually. Please keep these records available onsite as the USDA has the authority to conduct unannounced audits.

Civil Rights Training

TEFAP ATTESTATION

- Members that distribute USDA (TEFAP) foods for home consumption are responsible for collecting a TEFAP Attestation form for each client annually or more often if the client’s information for the form has changed. **Note: This does not apply to meal programs.**

[TEFAP Attestation forms can be accessed here.](#)

