



Food for Thought

Washington Food Coalition newsletter / Winter 2021

No one in Washington State should go hungry

WaFoodCoalition.org

Executive Director's Greeting

Dear WFC members and Friends,

It was another busy and crazy year for hunger relief organizations as we continue to work through the pandemic. As in 2020, you once again stood up to all the challenges that faced your organizations including increased number of customers, dealing with food shortages, supply chain disruptions, changing pandemic guidelines and the challenges of changing food distribution models, just to name a few.



You have all done such a wonderful job in keeping up with the ever-changing needs of customers over the past two years. It has been a long road. Hopefully 2022 will bring some relief.

The board and I would like to extend our warmest wishes for a restful holiday and a very Happy New Year!

Stay safe,

Trish Twomey

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Our Mission: The Washington Food Coalition actively educates and networks with organizations that strive to alleviate hunger throughout Washington

Our Vision: The Washington Food Coalition is the unified voice for a strong emergency food system

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Greetings from WSDA!



WSDA Food Assistance has received requests recently to clarify the process of ordering TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) commodities. There are many new staff and volunteers leading the work in food banks and pantries across the state, and it can be useful to understand why you receive the commodities you do. We also want to make sure you know the best ways to pass along feedback on food ordering to the team here at WSDA (Washington State Department of Agriculture).

What is the Food Ordering Process for TEFAP?

First, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) – Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) creates solicitations and contracts to determine what products will be available for states to order at a National level. Individual states do not decide which items are procured under contract and will appear in the catalog as available for ordering. After commodities are purchased, the process for ordering varies by Product Type.

Entitlement: USDA provides a catalog of the accepted solicitations and the State has choice in what it can order. WSDA ordering decisions are influenced by feedback received by TEFAP Contractors and Subcontractors (see more details below), ordering and delivery timeframes, available funding, statewide allocation formulas, and commodities that can instead be procured through bonus offerings.

Bonus and purchasing programs such as TMP or Build Back Better (BBB): Bonus items become available when USDA procures specific commodities to balance markets, prevent food waste, and respond to economic instability for farmers, vendors, or processors. Each state has choice on whether to accept or decline a specific offering, but cannot request substitution of these offerings for comparable items such as a different type of juice if juice is being offered, or a different pack size.

- WSDA will occasionally choose NOT to accept these Bonus offerings due to product type, timeframes, current capacity, and product acceptability. WSDA can give feedback to USDA on Bonus items, but generally it won't result in changes since it's usually a one-time procurement rather than an on-going product purchase. We try to combine small orders of Bonus – sometimes as little as one or two truckloads of an item offered to the whole state – into the same delivery window to make it more logistically viable to redistribute them across the state.

Who gives input to WSDA for ordering priorities?

The WSDA Food Assistance Ordering Workgroup: This is open to TEFAP Contractors and Subcontractors. Meetings are held quarterly about 6 months ahead of the delivery window.

Monthly Distribution Calls: Sponsored by Harvest Against Hunger, these are specifically for Distribution Partners (Contractors who support regional redistribution of commodities). This meeting covers which items are actually coming or not based on commodities that were cancelled or added as Bonus.

FA Advisory Committee: James Scovel, WSDA Food Assistance Program Specialist, will often give a food update at these meetings and field any questions, concerns, or feedback.

Other Feedback: Just let us know! Reach out to your Contractor or Regional Representative. James Scovel is also available to discuss specific inquiries or ideas.

Does WSDA let USDA know what products are desired?

We share requests for USDA to prioritize procurement of commodities based on feedback we receive on client preference, product acceptability, and most commonly on product and packing quality. Again, this feedback is most effective on Entitlement foods, not Bonus.

We frequently request increased healthy food options. USDA has made great strides in offering low-fat, low-sodium, and low-sugar foods. They are very receptive to this feedback, and we reiterate these requests when they are soliciting bids.

What additional options support healthier and higher quality foods?

- Farm to Food Pantry Initiative: This partnership between WSDA and Harvest Against Hunger provides funding to set up wholesale contracts with local small-scale farmers to increase the quantity and variety of nutritious, farm fresh foods in food pantries, improving access to healthier, culturally relevant food choices for Washingtonians.
- TEFAP Farm to Food Bank: This USDA funded program helps capture donated food from agricultural producers, processors, and distributors to provide to TEFAP food pantry clients, helping to reduce food waste and build relationships between hunger relief organizations and farmers. The funding supports the harvest, processing, packaging, or transportation of donated unharvested, unprocessed, or unpackaged foods. The grant application will be open December 10 – January 31 with funding available April 1 – October 31, 2022. A minimum of \$30,000 of grant funding will be provided to awardees. For further information about this opportunity, check out the WSDA grants page on or after December 10th.
- The Washington State Legislature allocated increased EFAP funding this biennium. You may utilize those funds for purchasing local, healthy, and culturally relevant foods that meet specific needs of your clients.
- We Feed WA Pilot Food Program: This pilot developed in lieu of the now discontinued USDA Farmers to Families Food Box Program established during COVID-19. WSDA is partnering with 26 contractors (including family farms, produce companies, and NGO's) across the state to bring support to some of the highest need areas of Washington, including Tribes.
- Future projects: We constantly seek to increase access to healthy, high quality foods and our most immediate priorities are a TEFAP Meal Kit Tool Kit, a pending USDA Local Purchasing Grant, and another round of the WSDA Food Assistance Flexible Funding Grants Program in SFY22. You can expect more details to be released soon!

We are so thankful for the partnerships and hard work from all of you which makes this work and the opportunities above possible. We hope this information encourages your continued feedback – both positive and constructive – and strive to offer even more effective support to you in the future.

In appreciation,

Kim Eads
WSDA Food Assistance Program Manager



Fresh Results Awards

Washington Food Coalition is thrilled to partner with the Washington State Department of Agriculture to launch our Fresh Results Award for 2022. This award acknowledges outstanding partnerships and projects involving the agricultural community.

The nominator must be a Food Assistance Program contractor and/or subcontractor receiving food from TEFAP or funds/food from EFAP. The winner of the award will receive a small monetary grant as well as an award presentation at the Washington Food Coalition annual conference in April 2022. The WFC will compile the top ideas generated from the

nominations received and publish them in a special newsletter to emergency food providers.

The nomination form is now open here! <https://wfc.memberclicks.net/freshresultsaward2022> Make your nomination today! One nomination per agency. There will be several categories to consider including 1) Farmer, 2) Farm to Community work, 3) Innovative Partnerships and 4) Expansion of Existing Program or Project. More details available on nomination form. Nominations will be due Monday, February 7th.

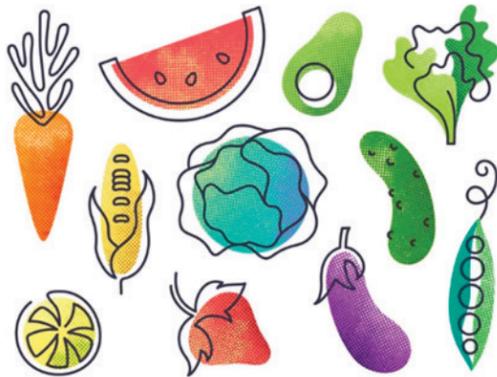
Washington Food Coalition Aims to Influence Food Choices by Instituting a Nutrition Policy

Ebony Taylor-Walker-White, SPU Dietetic Intern

The goal of Washington Food Coalition's soon-to-be-shared Nutrition Policy is to give WFC members a starting point for being intentional about how food procurement decisions can support health equity for your community. A nutrition policy is a formalized statement that acts a roadmap for the kinds of food you want to provide and how you want to provide that service. It promotes consistent decision-making. It also recognizes that pounds of food and number of calories are not the only meaningful measures – nutrition and cultural relevance matter too.

The thought of a WFC Nutrition Policy came from conversations with individual food providers and coalitions that have been working on their own nutrition policies. Eighteen providers and coalitions have adopted nutrition policies over the past 5 years through a project led by Northwest Harvest, Public Health Seattle & King County, University of Washington, WSU King County Extension and South King County Food Coalition. Feedback from these providers and coalitions identified the need for a set of statewide shared values to support more food providers in adopting and implementing nutrition policies. Washington Food Coalition (WFC) Executive Director Trish Twomey hopes that “the policy would ultimately help determine and influence the donations that are made to food providers through donors, corporations, the food industry, and government.” Creating a solid policy would take some time and Trish knew she could not do it alone. Public Health Seattle & King County provided funding and technical assistance to support WFC in convening a workgroup to help create the policy.

To create the WFC's Nutrition Policy Trish reached out to several partners throughout the state. This workgroup included Kate Ortiz (Public Health Seattle & King County), Cherish Hart (American Heart Association), Dana Cordy, MPH, RD, LD (formerly with Chicken Soup Brigade), Natalie Tauzin (Spokane Health District), Sandra Largaespada (Food Lifeline), Gary Newt (Northwest Harvest), Sarah Kane (Council on Aging) and Brenna St. John (Whitman County Medical Center), Amanda Sparks (Orcas Island Food Bank), Noelle Beecroft (Whatcom County WSU Extension), Lara Ashley Monroe (North Helpline), and Linda Mathews (WSU Extension Pierce County).



This past September at the WFC annual conference, the workgroup shared an initial draft of the WFC nutrition policy. The 30+ session attendees offered valuable feedback on the policy and how WFC could support member agencies in putting the policy into practice. In January, WFC members will receive a survey to gather feedback on the updated policy.

I sat in on a few of their work sessions. I saw a committee being mindful of the challenges that providing nutrient-dense and culturally relevant food choices may bring. The policy does not aim to end choice but to focus on nutrient-dense foods. This state-wide policy encourages each of the WFC member food banks and pantries to tailor their own policies to the unique needs of their customers. The WFC has also revised its food purchasing guide to include more culturally diverse resources. The WFC Nutrition Policy will be a living document that will be revisited regularly by a new committee of the WFC board to review and evaluate implementation. Be on the lookout in January for an opportunity to shape the WFC Nutrition Policy.

Board Members

- WFC Chair**
Andra Smith
Sequim Food Bank
- WFC Vice Chair**
Robert Coit
Thurston County Food Bank
- WFC Immediate Past Chair**
Ken Trainor
Sunrise Outreach Center
- WFC Secretary**
Ariel Medeiros
LaDow Food Pantry
- WFC Treasurer**
Jennifer Hardison
South Kitsap Helpline
- Anita Sailor
Rural Resources Community Action
- Taine Shoemaker
Colville Food & Resources Center
- Bob Mark
Upper Valley MEND
- Scott Kilpatrick
Community Services of Moses Lake
- Peny Archer
Community Services of Moses Lake
- Ariel Medeiros
LaDow Food Pantry
- Debbie Niehenke
Colton/Uniontown Food Pantry
- Cecilia Chavez
Tappanish Community Chest
- VJ Meadows
Tri-Cities Food Bank
- Jeff Mathias
Blue Mountain Action Council
- Chris Hattch
VOA Western WA
- Kathy Moe
Stanwood/Camano Food Bank
- Dan Lancaster
Multi-Services Center
- Cori Walters
Issaquah Food and Clothing Bank
- Ahndrea Blue
Eloise Cooking Pot
- Michelle Douglas
Emergency Food Network (EFN)
- Kellie McNelly
ROOF Community Services
- Robert Coit
Thurston County Food Bank
- Alan Hamilton
Clark County Food Bank
- Liz Cerveny
North County Community Food Bank
- Andra Smith
Sequim Food Bank
- Chris Benson
Central Kitsap Helpline

- At-Large Members*
- Kris Van Gasken
Des Moines Area Food Bank

It's Time to Renew your Membership or Join the WFC

Please take a few minutes to renew your membership to the Washington Food Coalition for 2022. If your dues are paid by your EFAP Contractor or your regional coalition those dues are rolling in. If you pay for your food program, please go online (<https://www.wafoodcoalition.org/membership3>) to renew for 2022. Membership fees are annual, from Jan 1st - Dec 31st each year.

- Discounted fee to our annual conference and other trainings and events
- A discounted copy of valuable resources manuals– Food Safety, Special Dietary Needs, Food Banking 101, and Best Practices.
- Weekly, monthly, and quarterly E-newsletters.
- Training opportunities for staff & volunteers plus on-call help and assistance answering your questions about programs and services, models, best practices, and more.
- On-line Food Bank Certification course for your staff/volunteers.
- Access to a discounted membership with WA Nonprofits, for even more fabulous trainings that are offered both online and in person, across the state
- Access to over 300 other WFC members – your colleagues in the fight against hunger!
- Discounted agency insurance through great American Insurance/Conover.
- Access to online resources and on demand training.
- Your agency has a vote in the election of your district representatives.

WFC Membership is easy and affordable!

Our sliding scale is based on budget size, making membership readily accessible to agencies of all sizes.

Membership Rate	Agency Budget Size (does not include the value of in-kind food donations)
\$25/year.....	\$50,000 or less
\$50/year.....	\$51,000-\$500,000
\$100/year.....	\$501,000-\$1 million
\$250/year.....	greater than \$1 million

If you have questions or need help joining or renewing, please contact Trish at trish@wafoodcoalition.org.

WFC Conference in April

Join WFC members and friends on Thursday and Friday, April 21st & 22nd in Wenatchee for a mini in-person conference. This day and a half conference will be a great time to learn, relax, meet new people, and see old friends. We hope you will plan to join us in April. Registration will open the first week of January 2022. For those of you that attended the virtual conference in September, we will be offering you a special discount. More details coming soon!

